

The Blessed
BIRTH DAY
Of our Saviour
JESUS CHRIST,
Annually to be kept holy, by
them that call upon Him in all Nations.

Proved by Scriptures, the Practice of the
Church Primitive and Reformed; the Te-
stimonies of the Fathers and Modern Divines;
strong Reasons grounded on the Word of
God confirming Miracles, &c.

With some holy Raptures in Contemplating of the
most observable Adjuncts about our
Saviours Nativity.

The Third Edition refined.

Allan Blayney

John 8. 56. *Your Father Abraham rejoiced to see my
day, and saw it and was glad.*

LONDON,

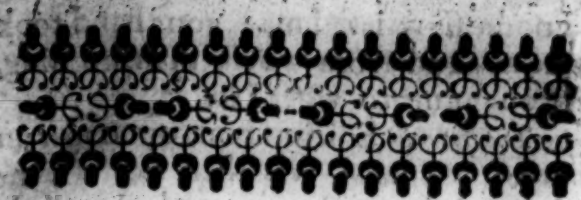
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sold at his shop in the middle of St. Dunstons
Church-yard in Fleet-street, 1658.

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To the *Worshipfull,*
much Honoured and munificent
Gentleman, JOHN DUTTON of
SHIERBOURN in the County of
Gloucester Esquire.

Sir,



His Pice had its *Conception*
under your Roof, and
its *Birth* from your
bounty; She was the
onely *Midwife* to bring
it out into the worlds

view: gave it its *first Birth* from the
Presse, and hath now renewed it by a
Second, which now by your *nerves* ha-
ving strength to go, comes to kisse your
hands, and to acknowledge its self (as I
do likewise) next *under God* your *Creature*;
for when all was gone, and nothing
left: I fallen and ready to perish, your

A 2 goodnesse

222480

The Epistle Dedicatory.

goodnesse relieved me: your hand took me up, and from worse than nothing, brought me to what I am.

Pastor fido. The former Edition came out under an unknown name, was then fearfull, the Subject being not commonly handled, and yet commonly spoke against, but your well known name adding a lustre to the Piece, and your great worth, together with your love of Learning and Antiquity, procuring it acceptance where ever it came, makes the second, even dare to wear the name of the obscure and worthless Author: The former Dedication was in verse, this in prose, both to you, to show, that in both the Authour's Yours: the Piece might have been worthy of a great mans acceptance, if the workman had been skilfull; but whatsoever it is, accept it (*noble Sir*) as the *Votaria Tabula* of my love and thanks dedicated to the Temple of your Honour: It was your pleasure to honour it with your Patronage, and it will honour you to your profit. It will not be a Pillar onely to keep your name in memory; but a Jewell to your Crown of Glory, in that you willingly became the worthy Patron

The Epistle Dedicatory.

to the first Traſſ that ever was purpoſely,
and ſolely written in defence of the ho-
nour due to the much deſpiſed day of Chriſts
Nativity, that day above all dayes, that
the Lord made his own, by being born there-
upon; the marriage day of heaven and
earth, God and man, when the word was
made fleſh, and dwelt among us. Chriſt the
Bridegroom, our nature the Bride, and you
by patronizing the Day, the Bridegrooms
friend; a Title more honourable than
Earth can give, An honour more profita-
ble than all the Gold Earths dark Exche-
quer doth incloſe, while that in the end
of the dayes, he ſhall ſeat you that have
thus honoured his Day near himſelf in
his glory for the day of Eternity, with
that Honourable Call, Friend, come up
hither; and give you a chief place among
the Saints, at his own right hand, with
an, He that honoureth me, him will I ho-
nour.

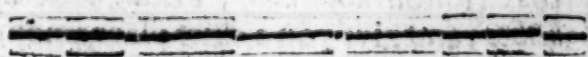
My Prayers Sir, (which are all my
Riches) ſhall be daily offered up for
the performance; as alſo for the pro-
ſperity of you, and your lovely and loving
Spouſe, that as you are *Una Caro in ter-
ra*, One Fleſh on earth; ſo you may be

The Epistle Dedicatory.

Unum Sydus in Cælo, One Constellation in Heaven, shining as the brightness of the Firmament, for ever and ever. You have been faithfull yoke-fellows, in drawing help and relief to poore Pastor Fido (My prayers ever) give me leave to present my self wholly Yours (for your so much owning him) in and by the name of

Your humble and devoted Servant,

Allan Blayney.



Names

Names of the Fathers, Historians, Modern Divines, and other Writers, that illustrate the truth in the following Treatise, and the time wherein they flourished.

<i>Anno Dom.</i>	<i>Anno Dom.</i>
1. <i>Clemens Romanus</i> 70.	21. <i>Chrysostome</i> 398.
2. <i>Ignatius</i> 71.	22. <i>Augustine</i> 420.
3. <i>Iustine Martyr</i> 150.	23. <i>Orosius</i> 425.
4. <i>Irenaeus</i> 180.	24. <i>Cyrillus Alex.</i> 430.
5. <i>Tertullian</i> 203.	25. <i>Theodoret</i> 431.
6. <i>Clemens Alex.</i> 204.	26. <i>Cassianus</i> 440.
7. <i>Origen</i> 226.	27. <i>Leo magnus</i> 444.
8. <i>Cyprian</i> 240.	28. <i>Prosper</i> 445.
9. <i>Arnobius</i> 285.	29. <i>Vigilius</i> 495.
10. <i>Lactantius</i> 290.	30. <i>Fulgentius</i> 500.
11. <i>Athanasius</i> 326.	31. <i>Rupertus</i> 580.
12. <i>Hillarius</i> 355.	32. <i>Isidorus His.</i> 596.
13. <i>Optatus</i> 365.	33. <i>Bede</i> 700.
14. <i>Basil the great</i> 370.	34. <i>Jo. Damascen</i> 731.
15. <i>Greg. Nazian.</i> 371.	35. <i>Rabanus Maurus</i> 830.
16. <i>Epiphanius</i> 337.	36. <i>Haymo</i> 850.
17. <i>Ambrosius</i> 374.	37. <i>Theophylact.</i> 880.
18. <i>Gregory Nyssen</i> 380.	38. <i>Oecumenius</i> 1070.
19. <i>Hieronimus</i> 385.	39. <i>Bernardus patrum</i>
20. <i>Prudentius</i> 390.	<i>ultimus</i> 1120.

Anno Dom.

<i>Dionysius Exiguus</i>	532.	<i>Petrus de natalibus</i>
<i>Nicephorus</i>	1305.	<i>Johannes Lucidus</i>
<i>Marcus Antonius</i>	1500.	<i>Alstedius</i>
		<i>Bonaventure</i>

Confessiones Ecclesiarum Reformatarum.

Anno Dom.

Anno Dom..

<i>Augustana</i>	1530.	<i>Suevica</i>	1530.
<i>Basiliensis</i>	1531.	<i>Wittenbergensis</i>	1552.
<i>Saxonica</i>	1551.	<i>Helvetica Posterior</i>	1566.
<i>Gallica.</i>	1559.	<i>Belgica</i>	1566.
<i>Helvetica prior</i>	1536.	<i>Bobemica.</i>	1573.

Ecclesiae Nationales.

<i>Poloniae, Subaudiae, Hungariae, Angliae, Scotiae</i>	
<i>Lituaniae, Russiae, Samogitiae, in praxi sud.</i>	
<i>Consensus Protestantium</i>	1541.
<i>Synodus Sendmorensis</i>	1570.

Modern Divines.

Calvin, Bullenger, Melancthon, Festus Hommius, Hemingius, Zanchius, cum multis aliis, &c.

*Old Fathers thirty nine, loe Christmas keep with me,
And hundred thousands more of brave yong gallantry.
Most zealous Sparks they are, they'l keep it every year
For Christ, and for his day, they'l spend their blood so
dear.
Let's hear what they can say they for themselves
Their words they will make way? while others are to
seek.*

The



T H E S I S.

The Birth-day of our Saviour Jesus Christ, the 25. of December ought yearly to be kept holy by all Christians.



PETER the Apostles chiefe, ^{1Pet. 2. 1, 2} and Christ's companion, did Prophecy, that in the latter dayes there should come false Cheaters; the Anagr.^a word I confesse in our Translation is Teachers, but we may read either, for they are both one; the one word doth anagramatize the other, and both words and deeds do prove them to be the same in these dayes, when Cheaters turn Teachers, and Teachers Cheaters; cheating Christ of his glory, denying the Lord that bought them, themselves of salvation, bringing upon themselves swift destruction: the way of truth, of its reputation, making it to be evill spoken of, Christ of his followers

Teachers.
Cheaters.

The Preface.

Verse 3.

lowers, they following them, and men of their moneyes, with feigned words, making merchandise of them.

Exod. 8. 3.

These daies are now upon us, and now these men; These unclean spirits like unto Frogs, Revel. 16. 13. doe not onely creep into houses, and lead captive silly women, as Paul foretold, 2 Tim. 3. 6. but even to their bed-chambers and beds, as those that plagued Egypt; and not onely there, but openly and abroad, like so many tinkling Copper-smiths, cry down Christ Jesus to magnifie the Diana of their own inventions;

Acts 19. 34

upon the Pikes of whose opinions, Christ and his truth are fossed daily in such a severe manner, that it is now grown disputable, whether Christ suffered more in his body by the fury and violence of the hand, or in his Divinity, and Divine ordinances, by the scourge and sting of venomous and depraving tongues, denying not onely the Lord that bought them, but all that any way belongs to him, leaving him more naked than he was between the two Thieves upon the Crosse, who stole nothing from him. One would have him
no

The Preface.

no God; another no man; this again, would have him a *meer man*, and that denies him a *true body*; one strips him quite of *flesh*, another cloaths him with it, but makes it *sinfull*; this would have him an *Angel*, that little better than a *Devil*, or at least that he used one. One forsakes the *Assembly of Saints*, another his *Sacraments*: one denies his *Prayer* to be said, another his *Birth-day* to be kept, as if his coming to save sinners were not worth the thanksgiving. Thus when men meddle too much with Christ, he gives them over to themselves, and will have nothing to do with them, and then every head is frantick with a strange opinion, and that with some wild fancy, which all meet in the same improbability, and foot-following falshood.

My task must be to confute them that do deny that the twenty fifth day of *December*, the day whereon our Saviour Christ came into the world, is to be kept holy. In traversing of which, give me leave to make use of that *Apology* unto all (in this case) which *Ambrose* did once to *Gratian* the *Emperour*, in the
case

The Preface.

case of Christs Divinity, Nolo argumenti
credas (sancte imperator) & nostre disputa-
tioni, Scripturas interrogemus, Apostolos, Pro-
phetas, Christum. Lean not so much to my
strength of Argument and disputation, as to
sacred authority and proof: Let us ask the
Scriptures, Patriarchs, Prophets, Evange-
lists, Apostles, Christ; let me adde, (for
so both my task and industry require)
Churches, Fathers, &c. Let us ask of the
former dayes, and them that are more a-
ged than we, the sacred Ecclesiasticall
Histories. Let us give Antiquity her
due, and not paddle in a new raised pud-
dle at our own doores, while we may
have our fill at a pure and clear fountain,
whereof while we drink therein, we may
see the truth cleared which we maintain.

To

Scriptures.

To begin then with the Scripture, Gods own word,
to prove the honour of his Day, who in
the beginning was the word,

IN the first of the Hebrews, at the sixth *Scripture*,
verse, when the Lord brings in the
first begotten into the world, he saith,
Let all the angels of God worship him; in the *Heb. i. 6.*
words, commanding those glorious
creatures to set the day of Christs birth
aside, for such an holy worship.

And so they did, for so we read, *Luke*
2. 7, 8, 9, 10. &c. no sooner had Mary
brought forth her first-born son. and laid
him in a Manger, but immediately the
Angels, according to the former com-
mand, descend from heaven in multi-
tudes, to make merry, and keep holy-
day with the wakefull *Shepherds*, in the
fields of *Ephrata*; *Heaven and Earth*,
Church Militant and triumphant, *angels and*
men thus meet in one, to solemnize this
glorious day; to make it so, and to
consecrate it for a future worship,
the glory of the Lord shone round about them;
The *Angel* preacheth the Sermon, and
his *Text* is suitable to the time and Au-
ditory, directed to them that were to
teach others; the words, *Fear not you,*
for behold I bring you tidings of great joy,
which

Scriptures.

Verse 14.

which shall be to all people, for unto you is born this day in the City of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord, The Sermon ended, the multitude of the heavenly host to sing the Psalme, the burthen whereof was, *Glory be to God on high, in earth peace, and good will towards men.* This done, the Angels depart, and leave their brethren the Shepherds to finish what they began; for this purpose they, as they were commanded by the Angels, go in hast to Bethlehem, and worship the new born Babe, which service once performed, they return not to their flocks, but leave them to the protection of the new born Shepherd, and go up and down all that day, preaching what they had heard and seen, and make them to wonder, and well they might, seeing great was this Mystery of godlinesse, God manifested in the flesh, seen of Angels, by them preached unto the Shepherds, believed on by the Jews, and all upon this day.

Verse 16.

1 Tim. 3. 16

Shall Angels then, that have no sin, preach and exhort their hearers to a celebration, and shall men be silent that are nothing but sin? Shall Shepherds leave their flocks, and Christians go to plough? Here we have *Gloriam Dei, diem illuminantem,*

Scriptures.

† *em, Angelum predicantem, multitudinem cante, Pastores feriantes*, the glory of God, † the day enlightening, one Angel preaching, the multitude singing, the Shepherds keeping holy-day, what better warrant for the sanctifying of this day? Shall the day then of *Christs Resurrection* be kept holy once a week, his birth-day from the Grave, and shal not the day of his *Nativity*, or of his birth from the womb be solemnized once a year? especially seeing we have more warrant for keeping of this than that, for that we have onely the practise of a few Churches, as of *Troas, Galatia and Corinth*, who used to meet together upon the first day of the week, but not one word of precept; but for keeping the day of *Christs Nativity*, we have both precept of God and Angels in the Church triumphant, the practise of the Shepherds and Christians in all ages in the Church militant.

A third place to prove this truth, we Psal. 116.3. have in the hundred and tenth Psalm, verse the third, where the Prophet speaking of the coming and Kingdome of Christ, saith, *In the day of thy power, the people shall bring thee free-will offerings with an holy worship, the day of thy birth, is as*
the

the womb of the morning: Or as our last Translation reads it, Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holinesse, from the womb of the morning, thou hast the dew of thy youth. Here the Prophet makes mention of a day, in which all people should bring free-will offerings unto Christ, with an holy worship, which is to be tendered unto him in the beauties of holinesse, that is, in the particular places of Assembly, the Churches, and therefore to be kept holy-day, nay must, for it runs, the people shall bring thee free will offerings, or they shall be willing in that day, shewing it to be their duty, when ever the day comes so to do.

Now what day is this, but Christs Birth-day? and therefore we have it here called the dew of his birth Tat jaiduthekah, most properly according to the originall, which was either as the womb of the morning, as one translation, or from the womb of the morning, as the other, the first shewing that the Birth of Christ, and dew or fruit thereof, was like the mornings womb, comfortable and pleasant unto all, according to the Angels testimony, Luke 2.10. Or that he was born in the beginning

beginning of the morning at cock-crowing, before perfect day, as appears in the same place.

Further, that the day here meant was the day of *Christs Birth*, appears especially in this, that it is called the day of his power, in the morning, whereof, his power was manifested in breaking open the gates of *MARIES Wombe*; nay more properly the *DAY* of his Power, because *Initium regni*, the beginning of his reign, being as this day born King of the Jews, Mat. 2. 2. When Kings came to do homage to this King of Kings that now was born, and whereupon he set his King upon his holy hill of Zion, and therefore the day of his power, Psal. 2. 6. when he said, Thou art my Sonne, this day have I begotten thee, vers. 7. That is to say, I have manifested thee by being born as upon this day, to be my first begotten from all eternity, giving thee the *Heathen* for thine inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession, that thou mayest break them with a rod of iron, and bruise them to pieces like a potters vessel: all arguments of great power, vers. 8, 9. concordant with the words of the 110 Psalm, v. 5, 6, 7. Behold the day of *Christs power*, upon that day,

Psal. 110. 1.
compared
with Psal. 2. 6

B

there-

therefore every year that the Prophecy may be fulfilled, the people that believe in him, are to bring him, not legall Sacrifices, which figured him to come; but the free-will offerings of praise, and thanksgiving for his gracious comming, to be tendred unto God in the beauty of holinesse, the places where we meet together to exercise holy duties, and the reason is, because the dew of his birth, like the wombe of the morning, did refresh all; so for that, refreshing thanks is to be given by all.

A fourth and last place, is, *John 8. 56.* where our Saviour Christ saith unto the Pharises, *Your father Abraham rejoyced to see my day, and he saw it, and was glad: What day was this? It was not the day of his Passion, nor of his Resurrection, nor of his Ascension into heaven, for these were to come when our Saviour spake the words, but that day was past of which he then spake; it could then be no other but the day of his comming and manifestation in the flesh (according to the current of Interpreters) that blessed day of his Nativity, which Abraham by the eye of faith beheld, and saw so many years before.*

Now, if he, the Father of the faithfull did

did so many years before, rejoyce and was glad to see *that day* a comming; surely all the *Sons* of the faithfull *Abraham* will in their successive generations be glad, rejoyce, and give thanks that it is come and past, and every y^r solemnize the same in remembrance of what they got by his comming, 1 Tim. 1. 15. 1.

Almost
1000.

This is that great *Festivall* called by the Eastern Church *Ἐπιφάνια* or *Ἐποφάνια*; *God appearing*, ὅτι ἐφάνη θεὸς ἀνθρώποις. *Ἐπιφάνια* because God appeared to men by his Birth; so *Basil^a* and *Nazianzen^a* *De huma-*
or so use the Apostles phrase, *God was* *na Christi*
manifest in the flesh. *c* *gen.*

b Orat. 38.
1 Tim. 3. 16

2. *Ἐπιφάνια* the *Epiphanie* or the appearing *κατ' Ἑσχήν* implying, that this appearing excelled all other whatsoever. But here two things are worthy to be noted. The one is, that the Churches in *Egypt*, because they celebrated *Christs* birth and also his *Baptisme*, upon one and the same day, called both these Feasts *d* *Nazian.*
Orat. in S.
lum.
Chrysost. ho.
de Epiph do.
Magdeb.
ccnl. 4. c. 6.

mory of the miraculous appearance of the *Star* which led the wise men to *Christ*.

^aMat. 2. 7.

^f *Nazian*
orat. 38.

3. Γενεθλία τοῦ σωτῆρος ^g The Birth-day of our Saviour.

^g *Chrys. orat. de philog.*

4. Ἡ ἐορτὴ μέγιστη, καὶ τῶν ἱερῶν μητρῶ-
πολιν. ^g The greatest and Metropolitan Feast.

The Western Church called it *Dies Na-
tivitatis*, the day of the Nativity. ^h By way
^h *Ambro. serm. 12, 13.* of imminency and dignity.

2. *Luminaria*, ⁱ The Feast of lights, either
ⁱ *John 1. 5.* because they used many lights and can-
dles at this Feast, or rather because Christ
the light of lights, that true light then
came into the world.

^k *Hieron. tom. 9. 82.*

3. *Dies Natalis Domini vel Natalitia Do-
mini.* ^k The Birth day of our Lord; we
call it *Christmas*, or *Christ's Messe*, not from
any Messe said thereupon, but from our
ancient word *Messe*, which signifies a
Feast, so that *Christmas* is no more than a
messe or *Feast* provided on the day of
Christ's birth, in a way of rejoycing as *A-
brabam* did, foretold by *Jacob* ^l *Gen. 49. 10.*
Marked out by the Prophet *Isaiah*, as a
special and wonderfull day; ^m nay, so
^m *Isa. 7. 14.* ravished he is with the consideration
thereof, that he rejoyceth with the
Church,

^l *Gen. 49.*

^m *Isa. 7. 14.*

Church, as if the day of Christs birth were then come. ^a They joy before thee according ⁿ Isa. 9. 6. to the joy in harvest, and as men rejoyce when they divide the spoil: For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given. And he is seconded by the Prophet Zechariah ^o say- ^o Zech. 3. 8. ing, Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, I will ^{10.} bring forth my servant (CHRIST) the Branch. In that day shall ye call every man his neighbour under the vine and under the fig-tree.

So much *de jure*, that the day may and ought to be kept holy of all them that have any part in Christ, and that by Scripture.

Now we come to prove that *de facto*, that it hath been kept holy in all ages, in all parts of the Christian world, and our witness shall be the practise of Gods Church, both East and West, in Asia, Africa and Europe, in the Primitive times, and of all the reformed Churches in Christendome, (Scotland onely excepted, and yet not altogether) in these times wherein we live. Which practise is sufficient to prove the point, though there were only general grounds out of Scripture to support and back it; the Church having power for any pub-

lick benefit, to appoint a day of thanksgiving yearly to be kept holy in remembrance of the same, and by the generall practise thereof, all the children of the Church, being bound to keep the same, in their succeeding generations.

Such was the feast of *Purim* instituted by the Church of the Jews, and commanded yearly to be observed by all their posterity in remembrance of their deliverance from *Haman's* cruelty.

Such was the Feast of the dedication of the Temple, at which Christ was annually present, yet neither of these were commanded by God.

Such is our Lords day, commonly so called, or the first day of the week, by us kept holy in remembrance of Christs resurrection (or his birth, or both) thereupon, for the keeping whereof we have no expresse command out of the word of God: but onely the bare practise of some few Churches, in the Apostles time, and the constant observance of all particular Churches over all the world, ever since their time, which with us is so prevailing an authority, and sure warrant for observation, that we should account him

him that should speak against the keeping of the Lords day holy, an *Anathema*, *Maranatha*.

Such then also, is the day of our Lords Nativity, which hath alwayes generally, universally, constantly, annually been kept holy in all Nations from the Apostles time to ours. For which we now come to produce our *Witnesses*; and first for the *Primitive times*, those purer dayes of Christianity.

The sum of whose evidence is, that our Saviour Christ was born in *Winter*, near unto or upon the very day of the *Winter Solstice*, or (as all agree) he was then born when the dayes began to encrease and lengthen, upon the 25 day of *December* say some, upon the eighth of the *Calends* of *January* say others, and yet all say one and the same thing, for the eighth of the *Calends* of *Januar.* & the 25. of *December*, according to diverse accounts are all one, and the *winter Solstice* in our Saviours time was upon the 25 of *December*, as also the *Vernall Equinox* upon the 25 of *March*, as all Astronomers confesse, and shall more plainly appear in the following Treatise, and so are all the Fa-

thers to be understood, that say with Saint Augustine, that Christ was Conceptus in æquinoctio verno: natus in Solstitio hyberno, Conceived in the vernal æquinox, and born in the winter Solstice, that he was born on the eighth of the Calends of January, that is to say, on the 25 day of December, as we in England have affirmed.

They say and affirm that this day was in the Primitive times kept holy by Apostolicall Tradition grounded upon the word of God; and such Traditions we are bound to observe, even by the word of God, as if they had been written by the Apostles themselves as we may be assured by those two Texts. 2 Thess. 2. 15. 1 Cor. 11. 2. S. Paul in the former bidding them hold the Traditions which they had been taught either by word, or his Epistle, and in the other praying the Corinthians, that they remembred him in all things, and kept τὰς παραδόσεις, the ordinances as he delivered them unto them. And such an Apostolicall ordinance, or Tradition, is the solemnizing of the Birth day of our Saviour Christ Jesus.

To proye the last first; let two or three
Witnesses.

Witnesses speak to this particular, and you shall have the rest open their mouths in the maintenance of the other, in the times wherein they lived.

First then, Saint Augustine in his 118 Epistle to Januarius, speaking of the yearly Feasts then observed, saith, *Illa quæ non scripta, sed tradita custodimus, quæ quidem toto terrarum orbe observantur, dantur intelligi, vel ab ipsis Apostolis, vel plenariis conciliis, quorum est in ecclesia saluberima auctoritas, commendata atque statuta retineri; sicuti quod Domini passio, & resurrectio, & ascensio in cælum, & adventus de cælo Spiritus sancti, anniversaria solemnitate celebrantur.* Those Feasts concerning which we have no expresse Scripture, but onely Traditions, which are now observed all the world over; we ought to know that the keeping of them was commended unto us, and instituted (or commanded) either by the Apostles themselves, or General Councils, of which there is a most wholesome use in the Church of God; such are the Feasts of our Lords Passion, Resurrection, Ascension into Heaven, and the coming down of the Holy Ghost, which are now kept holy, with a yearly solemnity.

But

Ep. 119.

Oportet,
It is need-
full, it is
our duty.

Christmas
day a Sa-
crament
day.

Floruit An-
420.

Floruit An-
370.

But here the prophane opponent may re-
ply, where is the Feast of the Nativity all
this while? I answer, he makes a more
speciall and honourable mention of it
in the very next Epistle (as not to be named
the same day with the former for the surpassing
excellency thereof) saying, *Hic primum o-
portet, ut Die Nativitatis Domini, Sacra-
menta celebremus, & ipsum revolutum anni
Diem festa devotione celebrare.* Here it
chiefly behoves us (more than in the fore-
mentioned Feasts) that upon the day of
our Lords Nativity, we should receive the
Sacrament in remembrance of him that
was born upon it, and upon the return
of the year, to celebrate the very day
with a Feasting devotion.

These words were written more than
1200. years agoe, when the forementio-
ned dayes, and especially that of the Na-
tivity, were kept festivall and holy, *Ubi-
eunque se diffundit terrarum universitas, uni-
versa quaecunque se diffundit ecclesia,* even
to the worlds end, wheresoever the
Church did extend her self, as he doth
maintain, *Libro 32. contra Faustum
cap. 12.*

To leave him for a while, *Epiphanius,*

Father more ancient than he by one hundred and fifty years, in his *Compendium* doth affirm, that the *Christians* of the *Primitive Church*, did fast upon all the *Frydayes* in the year, except the day of *Christs Nativity* fell upon a *Fryday*, which the *Church* (saith he) excepted by an *Apollolicall* tradition, not fasting but *fasting* thereupon.

We must not here omit, that ever since the time of *Christ*, according to the vulgar account, our *Saviour* hath been held to be born on the 25 day of *December*, in the year of the world, 3949. which account hath been received over all *Christendome*, for so much as belongs to that Day; It is called the *Vulgar* and *Dionysian* account, because *Dionysius Exiguus*, Abbot of *Rome*, in the time of *Justinian the Emperour*, about the year 532. got it established for the onely true and orthodox account, because it was the sole account used by the *Christians* that lived before, but especially, by *Eusebius*, *Jerome*, and *Prosper of Aquitaine*, who use none but in their *Ecclesiastical Histories* of the *Primitive times*.

Dionysius Exiguus, Anno 532. Floruit.

To adde more light hereunto, there is

a manuscript in the Archives of the publick Library at Oxford in the Arabick tongue, being a Codex of the Councils collected by Joseph the Egyptian wherein it is affirmed, that both the Feast, and also the day thereof, December the 25. is said to stand by Apostolical Canon, the words make it the Act of a Councell, saying, Ye are to constitute an Anniversary Feast, at the Nativity of the Lord Christ, on the day on which he was born, that is, on the 25 day of the first Canon i. e. of December; for this is the principall of all the Feasts.

There is another Arabick Manuscript in the Archives of the publick Library in Cambridge, composed by Sabid Aber Batrick, who in the life of Constantine hath these words to the same purpose. Our Lord and redeemer Jesus Christ was born on the 15 day of the first Canon, that is, of December, and on the sixth day of the second Canon, that is, of January, was the Epiphany or Baptisme of Christ. The Egyptian Calendar, in Kirker de computatione Ecclesiastica. 3. and Johannes Antiochenus or Melita, do in plain terms affirm the same. These testimonies I have tendered as they were

were transcribed and Englished by pain-
ful Mr. Gregory and communicated to me
by that learned, worthy and judicious
Divine, Doctor Hammon. As also that
Saint Chrysostome, in his Homily on Christs
Birth day, preached to the people of
Antioch, doth affirm and professe, that he
had it out of the Censuall Rolls or Ta-
bles of Augustus the Emperour, that is to
say, those Registers of all that were en-
rolled by Augustus his Decree, Luke 2.1.
together with the place and day of the
Moneth, and year wherein it was done,
that our Saviour; Christ was born on
the 25. of December, *παρά τῶν ἀκριβῶς*
ταῦτα εἰδόντων, καὶ τὴν πόλιν ἔκλεινεν οἰκῶν-
των παραλήψαμεν, we have received the
day from those that accurately knew
these things, and who dwelt in the Ci-
ty of Rome.

That enrolment or ἀπογραφὴ or Censur was
clearly the occasion of Josephs and Mariess
coming to Bethlehem, & when they were
upon that occasion, Christ was born,
and must therefore have his name and
birth enrolled also, as Saint Chrysostome
found it in them. And to these Tables
also Justine Martyr, in his Second Apolo-
gie,

gie, makes his Appeal to evidence the place of Christs birth, even to those Emperours of Rome, who would easily have been able to have disapproved him, if it had not been so. And further to witnesse the truth of their testimony, the same Father, writing against *Marcion*, lib. 14. cap. 19. saith, *Censum Augusti fidelissimum testem Dominice Nativitatis, Romane Archive custodiunt*, The Romane Archives preserve *Augustus Censuall Roll*, a most faithful witnes of the Birth of Christ.

Clemens
Romanus
Anno 70.
Phil. 43.

But to put it beyond all doubt, *Clemens* the Scholar of the Apostles, mentioned by Saint Paul, and called *Clement of Rome*, to distinguish him from the other of *Alexandria*, who flourished in the seventieth year of Christ, when all the Apostles (James excepted) were alive, who was Register unto them, and writ the Book of the Apostles Constitutions, in the thirteenth Chapter of the said Books sets this down for one.

The Apo-
stolicall
Decree for
the Day of
Christs
Birth.

Dies natalis Domini nostri Jesu Christi celebretur, vicesimo quinto die mensis noni (i.e. Decembris) numerando à Martio.

Lct

Let the Birth day of our Saviour Jesus Christ be celebrated on the twenty fifth day of the ninth moneth, (that is to say, of December) beginning to reckon from March.

And again,

Dies Festos agitate fratres, ac primum quidem diem Natalis.

Brethren, keep diligently the Feast dayes, and truly in the first place the day of Christs birth.

Behold the Constitution it self, word for word, and his exhortation annexed; by which and what hath been already said, and what shall be said hereafter, it doth and shall appear, that the twenty fifth day of December, hath even from the Apostles time, been kept holy by all Christians, solemnly meeting together in their severall Congregations, for the birth day of our Saviour Christ, there-upon joyning together in publick prayers, hearing the word, receiving the Sacraments, and giving thanks for his coming into the world; all building upon this Constitution, grounded upon the forecited

Constit.
lib. 5, cap. 12

forecited places of the Word of God.

Suppose it is true, which is not, that
 Justine An. 150. *Justine Martyr, Irenæus and Tertullian,*
 those first Fathers, who flourished in the
 age next to the Apostles, make no menti-
 on of keeping of this day, have not a
 line in all their writings now extant,
 to exhort the people to observe the
 same, shall we therefore conclude that
 the day was not therefore annually solem-
 nized? No in no wise (for those purer
 Christians did do it without all doubt,
 though many times privately, for fear
 of persecution) but their silence con-
 cludes rather, that the Christians then
 needed no exhortations to so holy a du-
 ty, nor no informations concerning the
 day and year of our Saviours birth, they ha-
 ving in perfect memory what the Apo-
 stles had delivered concerning this par-
 ticular.

But when afterwards the Mystery of
 iniquity began to worke, and divers
 Christians in those times of persecution
 and seducement, forgot their duty, and
 divers hereticks, the filthy spawn of Ebi-
 on and Cerinthus, began to deny the God-
 head of our Saviour, as Montanus, Theo-
 dotion,

Proclus, Alcibiades, Themiston, Patroclus, Artemon, Alexander, who with many more crept into the Church, about the year 200. denying not onely his Deity, affirming him a meer man, conceived of mans seed, but denying also his Birth-day to be kept holy, and dehorting their *Proselytes* from worshipping thereupon, least they should seeme to honour and alsoe acknowledge him for God. Hereupon the *Fathers*, those *Primitive lights*, to vindicate our Saviours Deity, and to shew that *Divine worship* was due to him, began vehemently to urge the keeping of the day, urging the *tradition* and *aforementioned constitution* of the *Apostles*, the *examples of their forefathers*, and the *Churches universall practise*, in the times that they lived in, bringing in the custome of the *Churches of God*, as a maine argument, as the *Apostle* likewise doth, in a smaller matter, 1 Cor. 11. 16. It is true what *Tertullian* saith, that *Christ was called truth not custome*, and that *custome without truth is nothing worth* but know that the *custome of the Church*, grounded upon *truth*, is like an armed man to fight for and maintain it.

C

To

To proceed then to the following Fa-
*Clemens A-*thers, *Clemens Alexandrinus*, who flourish-
*alexand. an-*ed at the same time with *Tertullian*, in
no 234. the year 204. repukes and censures the
followers of *Basilides* for Hereticks, who
held that our Saviour *Christ* was borne
on the twenty fourth, or twesity fifth
of *Pharmuth* or *April*, and others that
said that he was borne on the twenty
fifth of *Pachon* or *May*, contrary to the
ancient and received *Tradition*, *Libr. 10.*
Stromatum. Differences about it argue
the observation.

Next after him *Telesphorus* in his de-
Ep. dec. to. cretal Epistle saith, *Statutum est, &c, It*
1 Cor. pag. is ordained, that in the holy night of the Na-
117. tivity of our Lord and Saviour, they doe ce-
lebrate the publick Church-services, and in
them solemnly sing the *Angels Hymne*, be-
cause also the same night he was declared unto
the Shepheards by an *Angel*, as the truth it
self doth witnesse.

Next after him *Theophilus Bp. of Caesarea*
Theophilus in *Palestine*, a man approved by *M. Perkins*
in his demonstration of the problem, *Vol.*
2. p. 597. affirms, that we ought to cele-
brate the *Birth-day* of our Lord, on what
day soever the 25. of *Decem.* shall happen.
He

He is cited by *Magdeburgensis Cent.* 2. c. 6. and by *Hespinian de orig. Festorum Christianorum.*

Origen Scholar to *Clemens of Alexandria* famous about the year 226. in divers parts of his works records the annuall and universal observation of the same. *Origen* 262

After him *Cyprian* (who lived in the same age with *Arnobius* and *Lactantius*) *Cyprian* 243 and flourished in the yeare 240. Bishop of *Carthage*, and a glorious *Martyr*, hath one whole Sermon, now extant in his Workes, preached upon the very day of *Christ's* birth, part whereof we shal here ingrosse, which will give excellent light to the truth of this particular.

His words follow.

Adest Christi multum desiderata & *Serm. de*
'diu expectata Nativitas. Adest solemni- *Nat. Dom.*
'tas inclita, & impræsentiarum Salvatori
'grates & laudes visitatori suo per orbem
'terrarum sancta reddit Ecclesia. Gaudia
'nobis cælitus nunciantur, lætitia impe-
'ratur, nox ista sacri partus cōscia, nobis
'fulgoribus illustratur; gloriantur in cœ-
'lestibus superi, pax in terra, bona volun-
'tas hominibus confirmatur. Adiunt An-
'geli, loquuntur Pastoribus, non de-
C2 dignantur

dignantur loqui personis humilibus,
& cum ipsi sublimes sunt, infirmos non
aspernantur.

The much desired and long look'd
for day of Christ's Nativity, is now present
with us, that famous solemnity is now
upon us, and as upon this present day,
the holy Church, throughout the whole
world gives thanks to her Saviour, and
renders praise to him, that as this day vi-
sited her from on high. Joyes are preached
from Heaven, and merry-making com-
manded on earth. The foregoing night
conscious of that sacred Birth, is by us
turned to day by bright Burning
Lamps and Torches. The pow-
ers above give glory to God in the
highest, peace is promised upon earth,
and good will confirm'd unto men. The
Angels are present, and speak to the
Shepherds, they do not now disdain
to open their mouthes to mean persons;
and though they be most glorious crea-
tures, yet they despise not those who
are weak &c. So farre be and the Fathers
that lived before the Councel of Nice in
the first, second, and third Centu-
ry.

To

To come to the fourth, in the very beginning thereof, *Nicephorus*, in the seventh book of his *Ecclesiasticall History*, and the sixth Chapter, assures us, that at *Nicomedia* (a City of *Bitinia*) 'when the Festivall of Christs Birth-day came, and a multitude of Christians, of all ages, had assembled together in the Temple to celebrate that Birth-day. *Dioclesian* the tyrant, having gotten an advantagious occasion, whereby he might accomplish his madnesse and fury, sent men thither to inclose the Temple, and set it on fire round about, and so consumed them all to ashes, even twenty thousand persons. Never was such a bon-fire on a Thanksgiving day, never such a Sacrifice on the day of Christs Nativity; so many zealous Saints ascending up to heaven like *Manoah's Angel* in the flame, to sup with Christ above, the beginning of whose day they kept with the Church below.

But in the same age more honour was done unto the day by *Valentinian* Emperour of the West, *Theodosius* the great, and his Son *Arcadius*, Emperours of the East, who by their imperiall decrees au-

thorised the Feast of the Nativity, as Zago Zobo doth witness, an Authour quoted by Doctor Willet in his Synopsis, 9. gen. cont. q. 8 p. 406.

Basilus
magnus
370.

If any man shall dispute his credit, there is mention made of it by Basil the great, that glorious lamp of Cesarea, whose contemporaries were Athanasius, Hillary and Optatus, about the year 370. when this bright Star of Cappadocia, enlightened the world, and witnessed that for his time, the blessed day was annually kept with solemn observance, and he honours it with a new title, calling it *Diem theophylas*, as others after him, *Epiphaniom*, of *ἐπιφάνια* the day of Gods appearance, and that most elegantly, because that upon that day, *Θεὸς ἐφανερώθη ἐν σαρκί* God was manifested in the flesh. Further he hath left us one Sermon preached there pon now extant.

1 Tim. 3.
16. Tom. 1.
p. 466.

Gregorius
Nazianzen.
372.

And Gregory Nazianzen, who lived and flourished at the same time, hath an Oration made to the people upon that day, entituled, *Oratio in Sancta Epiphaniomum Lumen*, An Oration upon the hallowed light of the Epiphanyes, (by which name saith the learned Zanchy) the

Vol. 4. l. 1.
219. Thesis.

the Fathers did not understand the day commonly so called, when Christ was worshipped by the wise men of the East, but the day of his Birth and Baptisme. Nay more, in his 38. Oration, he breaks out into this admirable expression, *Virtutes cælestes quoque hodierno die, &c.* I am confident, that even the heavenly powers do also this present day celebrate the Feast together, and leap exceedingly for joy, seeing they are endued with the love of God and men.

Epiphanius, that great light of Cyprus, *Epiphanius* who flourished at the same time with the *Ann.* 373. two forementioned Fathers, and continued under the Emperours, Valens, Gratian, Theodosius, in his book entitled, *Compendiaria, varia Doctrina, de fide Catholica, & Apostolica ecclesie*, reckoning up the annuall Feasts then kept, and solemnly observed by the Catholick Church, mentions the day of Christs Birth for one of the principall and chief. And further in his 51. Heresie affirms, that Christ was born *circa Januarii mensem*, about the moneth of January; who hath left us six Sermons all preached on the very day.

The next is Ambrose Bishop of Millain *Ambrose.* in Italy, who flourished at the same time 374.

under the Emperors, *Gratian* and *Theodosius*, about the year 374. Who doth witnesse for the *Western Churches*, that in them in his dayes, *this day* was generally kept holy; and in his second Sermon preached thereupon, descanting upon the *Birth dayes* of *Christ*? and *John* the *Baptist*, his forerunner, affirms *John* to be born at *Midsummer*, and our *Saviour* in the *Winter*; his words are these.

‘*Ecce in Nativitate Christi dies cre-*
‘*cit, in Nativitate Johannis decrevit,*
‘*Christo oriente lux proficit, Johan-*
‘*ne nascente minuitur; Ipsa enim quo-*
‘*d in modo tempora famulantur par-*
‘*tibus suis. Cum detrimentum faciunt:*
‘*Servus gignitur, cum autem Dominus*
‘*nascitur: augmentum consequuntur;*
‘*perfectum plane facit. Dies cum mundi*
‘*salvator oritur, defectum patitur, cum*
‘*ultimus Prophetas generatur. Scribi-*
‘*tur enim, Lex & Prophetas usque ad Johan-*
‘*nem, atque ideo necesse erat ut obscu-*
‘*raretur legis observatio, ubi evocatio*
‘*ubi Evangelii gratia, resulgebant, &*
‘*cessaret prophetia veteris testamenti,*
‘*cum novi Testamenti gratia succe-*
‘*debat*

debat. Ergo in Nativitate Domini
proficit Dies quem splendidissima lux
veritatis illuminat.

Behold (saith he) at the Birth of Christ
the day doth encrease, at the birth of
John it doth decrease: Christ rising the
light is augmented, John being born it
is lessened. For the very times in a
manner do wait upon their several Nati-
vities; when they loose, the servant is born
when they gain the Master is brought
forth. The day doth sensibly encrease
when the Savior of the world came into
it, but decrease, when the last of the Pro-
phets was born in it: for it is written, that
the Law & the Prophets continued til Johns
and therefore it was needfull that the
observation of the Law should be dark-
ned, when the calling and grace of the
Gospel began to shine clear: and that
the Prophesie of the Old Testament
should cease, when the grace of the new
did succeed. Therefore upon the Lords
birth, the day doth encrease, because the
brightest light of truth doth enlighten
it.

The next is Gregory Nyssen, brother *Gregorius*
to Basil the great, and of the same time *Nysenus*
with 330.

with Saint Jerome, he was present at the first Council of Constantinople, and writ the Creed confirmed in that Council, he flourished about the year 380. and witnesseth the very same thing with Saint Ambrose in his Oration made upon the day of Christs Nativity: saying,

‘In hac die minui tenebræ incipiunt,
‘noctisque modi augeſcente radio, ad
‘deſectum rediguntur, Myſterium natu-
‘ra exponit perſpicacioribus, ac docet
‘quid ſibi velit, quod in adventu Domi-
‘ni dies creſcit, nox decurtatur.

Upon *this day* the darknes begins to diminish, and the *nights*, by the encreaſing ſun-ſhine grow ſhorter; nature her ſelf expounds the myſtery to the more prudent & teacheth us what is meant by this, that at the coming of Chriſt into the world, *the day encreaſeth and the night diminitheth*. Then he addes the expoſition in moſt elegant terms following.

‘Ego talia quædam dicentem mihi vi-
‘deor audire Creaturam; Vides no-
‘ſtem ad ſummam longitudinem pro-
‘greſſam, atque ulterius currere, ac pro-
‘terri deſiſtere, & in contrarium reſolvi.
‘Animadvertite quod improba peccati

nox

nox quoad fieri ad ejus poterat aucta, atque extremam nequitiae magnitudinem affecta hodie ulterius progredi, ac sibi quasi possidendo usu capere prohibita est, atque dehinc ad defectionem redigitur. Vides lucis radium diutius durare, & solem esse solito sublimiorem, animadvertite veræ lucis adventum, quæ radiis Evangelicis orbem illuminat.

Me thinks I hear the Creature speaking such like words as these unto me. Thou seest the night hath gain'd his utmost length, and ceaseth now to run out, or to be extended any further, but as it were to retreat. Take notice then, that now the dishonest night of sin, having increased it self, as far as it was possible, and reached the extreme point of ungodlineffe, was this day prohibited to reach any further, and hereupon became shorter, and shorter. Thou seest the Sun to shine longer than it did the dayes before, and to appear higher in the Heaven than it was wont; take notice then of the true light, that at this time sprung up among us, and by the beams of the Gospel enlightens every one that comes into the world. And S. Hierome seconds him,

Hieronymus
Tom. 9. p. 81

saying,

saying, that the day kept in memory of our Lords Nativity, is the day on which the ancient report is, he was born.

The next is, *Aurelius Prudentius*, who in his *Cathemerinon* gives us Carrol, a Divine Hymnus 8. Hymn, by him pen'd, and made in honour of Christ, who was born that day. I shall give

Prudentius,
Anno 390.
Hymnus 8.
Cal. Jan. p.
60.

*Q*uid est quod arctum circulum,
Sol jam recurrens deserit,
Christus ne terris nascitur,
Qui lucis auget tramitem?
Heu quam fugacem gratiam
Festinaolvebat dies?
Cum pene subductam facem
Sensim recisa extinxerat?
Cælum nite scat, letius
Gratetur & gaudens humis,
Scandit gradatim denuò
Iubar priores lineas.
Emerge dulcis Puer, o,
Quem matris edit Castitas,
Parens & experts Conjugis
Mediator & duplex genus.
Ex ore quamlibet Patris,
Sis ortus & verbo editus,
Tamen paterno in pectore,
Sophia Callebas prius.

How

give You it both in *Latine* and
Englisch, that it may be like *Moses* his
song, *Deut. 31.28.* a record against them
that keep not the day, which the *old Fa-*
ther so devoutly merry did 200 years ago, so
much honour, with a piece of *Divine*
Poesie, his strains follow.

How happens it that now the Sun,
From th'artik circle back doth run:
Is *Christs Birth day* now come in sight,
That doth augment the train of light?
How did the hasty day alas!
Before rowl up his flying grace?
How did it piece-meal par'd away,
Almost put out the lamp of day?
The Heaven may glister with more state,
And the glad earth congratulate,
For now again upon this day,
The sun doth climb his former way,
Then shew thy self, Babe sweet in feature,
Thou God and man our Mediatour,
Brought forth by a most chaste creature,
Who knew no man, and yet a mother.
Although sprung from thy Fathers mouth,
And publish'd by the word of truth,
Thou wast that wisdom that did rest
Before thy Birth in Fathers Breast.

Qu

30
Que prompta Cælum condidit,
Cælum diemque, & cætera,
Virtute verbi effecta sunt.
Hæc cuncta nam verbum Deus.
Sed ordinatis sæculis,
Rerumque digesto statu,
Fundator ipse & artifex
Permansit in patris Sinu.
Donec rotata annalium
Transvoluerentur millia,
Atque ipse peccantem diu
Dignatus orbem viseret.
Nam cæca vis mortalium,
Venerans inanes nenas,
Vel æra vel saxa algida,
Vel ligna credebat Deum.
Hæc dum sequuntur, perfidi
Prædonis in jus venerant,
Et mancipatam fumido
Vitam barathro immerserant.
Stragem sed istam non tulit :
Christus cadentum gentium,
Impune ne forsân sui,
Patris periret fabrica.
Mortale corpus induit,
Ut excitato corpore
Mortis catenam frangeret ;
Hominemque portaret patri.

Which ever prompt the heav'n did frame
And all things elie that we can name,
As Heaven and day, and all abroad,
The word made all, that word, was God.
And now the world is ordered,
And state of things established,
The founder yet, and work-man main,
In Fathers bosome did remain.
Till many thousand years run round,
Coursing o'r them that dwelt on ground
He did vouchsafe to visit them,
The world of daily sinning men.
For mortals superstition blind,
Worshipping vain toys of mind,
Brasse, wood, cold stones, believ'd to be
The onely God in persons three.
By this means then did fall all Lands,
Into the trayterous robbers hands,
Their enslav'd souls without reason,
Plunging in *Hels* smoaky prison.
But *Christ* could not endure the fall
And slaughter of his *Gentiles* all
Unpunished, lest in that day,
His *Fathers* fabrick should decay.
A mortall body he did take,
That therein moving he might break
The chain of death, pull out the sting,
And man unto his *Father* bring.

This

Hic ille Natalis Dies
 Quo te creator arduus
 Spiravit & limo indidit
 Sermoni carnem glutinans.
 Sentis ne virgo nobilis
 Matura per fastidia,
 Pudoris intactum decus
 Honore partus crescere?
 O quanta rerum gaudia
 Alous pudica continet,
 Ex qua novellum Seculum
 Procedit & lux aurea.
 Vagitus ille Exordium
 Vernantis orbis prodidit,
 Num tunc renatus sordidum
 Mundus veterum depulit.
 Sparsisse tellurem reor
 Rus omne densis floribus
 Ipsasque harenas lyrtium.
 Fragrasse nardo & nectare.
 Te cuncta nascentem (puer)
 Sensere dura, & barbara:
 Vitæque saxorum rigor.
 Obduxit herbam cotibus.
 Jam mella de scopulis fluunt
 Jam stillat illex arido
 Sudans amomum stipite:
 Jam sunt myricis balsama.

This, O Christ, was thy Birth-day,
When the Creator cloath'd with clay,
Thee breath'd by him, and then at last,
The word unto the flesh glu'd fast.
O noble Virgin do'tt not see
(Made pregnant by humility)
The Honour of thy chastity
By him enhaunc'd: that's born of thee.
O how great joyes themselves entomb:
Of things below in thy chaste womb,
Out of which, *this* day came in sight
A new age and a golden light.
The crying of thy Babe began.
The *worlds* spring, before the Sun,
For then the world made new *that* day:
Her old foul coat did cast away.
Then I suppose the earth indeed (spread
With flow'rs all thick, the Countrey
And even the Indian quick sands, they
With Nard and Nectar-breath'd that day.
O Babe things rude, and barbarous,
All of thy Birth were conscious;
The stones their hardnesse did let passe,
And hardest *whetstones* sprouted grasse.
Now honey from the rock did fill,
The dry stockt *elm* shew'd its good will,
In sweating forth sweet sented Gum,
And *shrubs* in dropping pure Balsam.

D

Eternall

O sancta praesepis tui,
 Aeternae Rex, cunabula
 Populi que per seculum sacra
 Mentis & ipsis credita.
 Adorat haec brutum pecus :
 Indocta turba scilicet,
 Adorat excors natio,
 Vis cuius in pastu sita est.
 Sed cum fidei spiritu,
 Concurrat ad praesepia
 Pagana gens, & quadrupes
 Sapiatque quod brutum fuit.
 Negat patrum prosapia,
 Perosa praesentem Deum :
 Credas venenis ebriam,
 Furiisque lymphatam rapi.
 Quid prona per scelus ruis ?
 Agnosce, si quicquam tibi
 Mentis recedit integrae,
 Ducem tuorum principum.
 Hunc quem latebra, & Obstetrix
 Et virgo facta, & Cunula
 Et imbecilla infantia,
 Regem dederunt gentibus.
 Peccator intueberis
 Celsum coruscis nubibus,
 Dejectus ipse, & irritis
 Plangens reatum fletibus.

Eternall King, born in a Stable,
 Thy holy Swathbands, Manger, Cradle,
 Were sacred held by ages past,
 Believ'd by dumb men at the last,
 These things the brute beasts & the Bore,
 The unlearned rout (I mean) adore,
 An heartlesse Nation, who indeed
 Know nothing else, but how to feed.
 Let Pagans with a stable spri't,
 Unto the Stable run outright;
 Let four footed Beasts discern
 What four footed Beasts concern.
 Their Fathers Sonnes, they this deny,
 Hating God, now us so nigh. (drunk
 Thou wouldst believe them poyson
 With furies into madnesse sunk:
 Why dost thou headlong run to sin?
 If some sound reason be within?
 Acknowledge Christ who is indeed
 Of all thy Princes, the chief head.
 This Babe whom Midwife, cradle, night,
 And Virgin lighted, brought to light;
 And nonage weak, now forth did bring
 Unto the Gentiles for a King.
 Sinner, thou shalt one day espie
 In heavens bright clouds exalted high,
 Dejected then thou shalt in vain
 Lament with tears thy guilt amain.

D 2

When

Cum vasta signum buccina
 Terris cremandis miseris
 Et scissus axis cardinem
 Mundi iunctis solverit.
 Insignis ipse & praeeminens
 Meritis rependet congrua
 His, lucis usum perpetuo
 Illis Gehennam & Tartarum.
 Iudea tunc salmen Crucis
 Ex prta qui sit senties,
 Quem, te furoris presule
 Mors hausit, & mox reddidit.

Anno 398.

The next is Chrysostome, who lived at
 the same time with Aurelius Prudentius, a-
 bout the year 398, of whom the Christian
 of Tauro Cilicia, were wont to say, that
 it was better that the Sun should with-
 draw his shining, than that Chrysostome's
 mouth should be stopp'd from speaking. He
 was first a Priest of Antioch, after that
 Bishop of Constantinople, called Golden
 mouth, and not without cause; Demosthe-
 nes Christianorum, the Christians De-
 mosthenes. He in an especial manner
 spends his Rhetorick in magnifying the
 celebration

When as he with loud Trumpets sound,
 Shall give a signe to burn the ground,
 And the broke ax tree: by his fall
 Unhinge the Center ruine all.
 He judge supream, then all apart,
 Shall give to all men their desert.
 To Martyrs light: Hells night for aye,
 To such as did despise his day:
 Then to Judea, Judge shall he
 (The Crosse a thunder bolt shall) be
 To those fierce men, who to death
 Judg'd him which stop, and gave him
 breath.

celebration of this day, in an high strain,
 as followeth; and first, in his Oration De
 beato Philogonio: saying,

Appetit jam Festum omnium Festorum
 maxime venerandum, adorandumque;
 quod si quis appetet omnium Festorum Me-
 tropolin, hanc quaquam aberret: Quid
 autem hoc est? Christi iuxta carnem Nativi-
 tas: Ab hoc enim illustrato Die, Festum E-
 piphaniarum, ac Sacrum Pasche, Ascensio,
 & Pentecoste, originem ac fundamentum du-
 cunt. Nisi enim secundum carnem natus esset,
 Christus nequaquam baptizatus fuisset, nam

ideo est Festum Theophaniorum, nequaquam
fuiſſet crucifixus, hoc enim eſt Feſtum Paſche,
nequaquam miſſus eſſet Spiritus Sanctus, hoc
enim eſt feſtum Pentecoſtes. Itaque ab hoc,
ſeu fonte quopiam hi diverſi amnes orti, nata
ſunt nobis hec Feſta.

Now that Feaſt is come, the moſt to
be revered, and adored of all other
Feaſts; But what Feaſt is that? The Birth-
day of our Saviour Chriſt, according to
the fleſh, which if any man ſhall call it
the *Metropolitane* feaſt, he is no way in an
errour; for from this day, made ſo il-
luſtrious in its obſervation, the Feaſt of
the *Epiphany*, *Paſſeover*, *Ascenſion*, and
Pentecoſt, have their ground and origi-
nall, for if he had not been born ac-
cording to the fleſh, he had not been bap-
tiſed, which is the Feaſt of the *Theopha-
nies*, he had not been crucified, which
is the Feaſt of the *Paſſeover*; he had not
ſent down the Holy Ghoſt, which is the
Feaſt of *Pentecoſt*. Therefore from this,
thoſe diverſe *Rivulets* do ſtream, as from
their proper *fountain*; and from his Birth
thoſe Feaſts have their Birth and breeding.

Note here, that *Juſtine Martyr*, one of
the moſt ancient of the *Fathers*, who
flowiſhed

flourished in the year 150. in his second Apology, *ad finem*, and before him *Ignatius*, S. *Johns* Disciple, who flourished in the 171 year after Christ, in his Epistle to the *Magnesians*; and *Ireneus*, who was famous about the year 180. writing to *Victor* Bishop of Rome, and *Tertullian*, who writ in the year 203. *Lib. de corona Militis*, do witnesse, that the Feasts forementioned by *Chrysostome*, were generally observed and kept in their dayes, and therefore the Feast of the Nativity, not mentioned in their writings, not extant, must be then kept and observed also, it being according to the Father the foundation of them all.

This I thought good to note by the way, against them that build much of their hay and stubble, against the honour of his Birth-day that was born in the Stable, upon the silence of the first Fathers. We now proceed with holy *Chrysostome*, who further addes in the forecited place.

Verum, non ob hoc tantum, par est, hunc diem cæteris anteponi, sed ob id, quod in hoc natum est, & cæteris omnibus est venerabilius. Nam quod Christus homo factus, mortuus est, qui pul-

Chresost.
397.

lum peccatum pertraxisset, quid huic poterit adjungi miraculo? Sed mortale corpus assumptum, hoc quoque admirandum. Cæterum, quod Deus cum esset voluerit homo fieri, tantumque se dimittere sustinuit, quantum in cogitatione ne quidem complecti queas, hoc est omnium maxime reverendum, stuporisque plenum, quod quidem Paulus admirans dicebat, magnum esse prelati mysterium Deus, declaratum in carne, & a libris cum angelis apprehendit Deus semen, sed semen Abraham apprehendit, ut poterat fratribus in omnibus as-
simulari.

But not onely for this reason is it thought meet that Christs Birth day should be preferred before those of his Baptisme, Ascension and Pentecost; but for that which was born thereupon, it ought to be held more venerable than all other; for that Christ made man should die, who had contracted no sin; what can be added to this miracle, but that he did assume a mortall body? this is also wonderfull and to be admired. But that being God, he should be made man, and so far debase himself, as cannot enter in-

to the mind of man to conceive; this is
of all the other, the most wonderfull
and full of amazement, which Paul ad-
miring, cries out, Great is the mystery of
godlinesse, God manifested in the flesh; and
again in another place, He took not upon
him the nature of Angels, but the seed of
Abraham, that he might be made like to his
brethren in all things.

1 Tim. 3.

Heb. 2.16.

Propter hoc potissimum diligo diem huius, a-
moque. Cramerem ejus in medio propeo, ut
vos amatoris huius pharisci participes red-
dam; Roque vos amicos, obtestor, rogoque ut
summo studio, summaque alacritate, velitis
adesse; sed prius suam unusquisque domum re-
purget, ut videamus Dominum nostrum, in
cunis jacentem. Quid enim conturbabimus, aut
quam veniam obtinebimus? Si quum ipse na-
stra causa descenderit de caelis, nos ad illum ex-
adibus nostris ire gravemur. Quam aliogene
Barbarique ex Perside accurrunt, ut illum vide-
ant in praesepe jacentem, suvero ne brevis qui-
dam spacium emittiri sustinet, ut hoc salu-
spectaculo perfruaris? Nam si cum fide ac-
cessimus, procul dubio videbimus illum in
praesepe jacentem. Siquidem Mensa vicam
explet praesepe.

Christmas
day bid ho-
ly by Sr.

Chrysostome
It was the
use of the
Church
then so to
do, as shall
appear.

For this very reason, I love this day in
an

an especiall manner, and propose unto
 you the love thereof; that I may make
 you partakers of this lovelie medicine.
 Therefore I exhort and beseech you all, that
 you will be present thereupon, with all en-
 deavour and all alacrity. But first of all let
 every one of us purge his own house,
 that we may see our Lord Christ lying in
 his swadling cloaths; For what excuse shall
 we make, or what plea shall we put in
 for our absence? if that upon that day,
 when he came down from Heaven for
 our sakes, we should think much to go
 out of our own houses to worship him?
 If when Strangers and Barbarians did take
 a far journey out of Persia, that they
 might see him lying in the Manger, we
 should grudge to go a little way to
 Church to enjoy that blessed sight. For
 without all doubt, if we come hither by
 faith, we shall see him Cradled in the
 Manger, because the Lords Table, sup-
 plies the place of that Manger unto us.
 Again, the same Father in his second
 Tome, and the third Homily, Preached up-
 on the day of our Saviors Nativity, speaking
 of the different keeping of the day by
 Christians in Armenia, Egypt, and all
 the

the rest of the world besides, they observing the sixth of *January*, on the day of the *Epiphany*, when he was *Baptized*, and these the *twenty fifth* of *December*, thus ends the controverſie.

‘*Tractemus in corde noſtro, quod hoderuo die Chriſtus naſcitur (25 Scilicet Decembris) Alii putant quod in Epiphaniis naſcitur; Non dampnemus aliorum opinionem, noſtram ſequimur doctrinam; unusquiſque in ſuo ſenſu abundet, & forſitan revelabit unicuique Dominus. Et illi qui dicunt tunc naſci ſalvatorem, & nos qui hodie dicimus naſci, unum Dominum colimus, unum infantulum ſuſcipimus. Sed videamus quod magis rationabilius! Ratio noſtra non reprehendit alios, ſed nos probat. Non ſunt noſtra quæ loquimur, Majorum ſententia eſt; Univerſus mundus, contra hujus provincie opinionem loquitur; Hic Apoſtoli fuerunt, hic traditio ſunt; Nos dicimus quia hodie Chriſtus natus eſt, in Epiphaniis, in Epiphaniis renatus. Mundus ipſe teſtimonium noſtrum, creatura nobiſcum teſtatur, uſq; ad hunc diem creſcunt tenebræ, ab hoc die creſcit Dies, decreſcit*

‘cit nox; Errorem veritas subit, hodie
‘nobis sol Justitiæ nascitur.

Let us meditate in our heares that
upon *this day* (to wit *December the twen-
ty fifth*) Christ was borne: Others are
opinion, that he was borne upon the day
of the *Epiphany*; We do not condemn
other mens opinions, yet we will fol-
low our owne doctrine; Let every man
be resolved in his owne minde, and may
the Lord will also reveale this particu-
lar to every man. For both they that thinke
our *Saviour Christ* to be borne at the
time, and we that maintaine him to be
borne as *this day*, do worship the same
Lord, and imbrace the same Babe. But
let us consider whole ground is stronger.
Our reason reprehends not others,
justifies our selves. The words we speake
are not ours, they are the definitive sen-
tence of our ancestors. The whole world
speaks against the opinion of that other
Province; The *Apostles* are for us, the
Tradition takes our part, and welays that
Christ was borne as upon *this day*,
and borne againe upon the *Epiphany*.
The world is our witness, the creature
testifieth with us, to this day the night
increaseth.

Being Bap-
tizd in *Jor-
dan* there-
upon.

increase, from this day they doe decrease. Truth comes in the place of Error. This day the Sun of Righteousnes rose upon us.

Once more, for the time, the Father adds in the foresaid Homilie, that the Annuntiation and Conception of our Lord was upon the eighth of the Calends of April, and that he was borne in the moneth of December, in the winter time upon the eight of the Calends of January, upon the day of the winter Solstice.

Chrys. anno
398.

I now laugh to think how the ignorant opponent doth begin to insult upon these seeming contradictions, and calls the old Father dotard; & is ready to dance a jig for joy, if he had but a Scattish Bugabe; but they that are wise know that he betrayes his owne ignorance in Chronologie, and shews himselfe a fool; for the day of the winter Solstice, is betwixt the fifth of December, and the eighth of the Kalends of January, will prove all one day, if we call but to mind what we noted before, that in our Saviour's time the vernal Equinox was upon the 25. of March, according to our English and Julian

Julian account, which was the eighth of the Calends of *April*, according to the account of the *Hebrews*; their *Nisan* their first month in the year, beginning in the middle of our *March*, and having in it fourteene dayes of our *April*, so that the twenty fifth of *March* with us, is the eighth of *April*, according to them; and the eighth of *January* with them is the twenty fifth of *December* with us, and the twenty fifth of *December* then (when *Christ* was borne) was the day of the winter *Solstice*. As *Valerius Bellunensis* in his *Compendium* on the *Sphaera* p. 224. doth witness in these words: *Tempore Augusti Octaviani, ut observat Plinius, brumæ dies vigesimo quinto Decembris erat, quo die natus est Christus assertor noster.* In the time of *Augustus Octavian* as *Pliny* observes, the shortest day was on the twenty fifth of *December*, on which day *Christ* our Redeemer was borne. See also the *Julian* and *Roman* *Kalendars*, in *Baronius*, *Genebrard. Chron. lib. 3. Gualterius, Tab. Chron. Gordon Lesmor, Chron.* Note one thing more, and that is the great zeale of the *Christians* in those dayes, almost 1300. yeares agoe, and their

Christ. anno
398.

their strictness in computing and observing the very day of the birth of our Saviour Christ, and keeping it holy, appearing especially in this, that they would not allow the *Armenians*, or *Egyptians*, an eleven dayes difference; Yea, so heinous a thing it was accounted to keep it on any other day, but the twenty fifth of *Detember*, that their Doctors, those bright lights of the *Primitive Church*, both writ and preached against it, and the whole world did withstand it.

So much for *Chrysostome*, and too much for any *Scottish Piper* to play *No syke matter*. Yet we have as pregnant witnesses as he, among whom is *St. Augustine*.

Augustine

Augustine, that famous Father,

Bishop of Hippo, in Affrick, we may name
the chiefe, who flourished in the yeare
430. and hath four and twenty Sermons in
print, Preached upon the very day of Christs
Birth; in which he witnesseth diverse
times, that in his time this day was set aside
by all Christians, throughout the whole
world, for such holy exercises, as Preaching,
Prayer, receiving of the Sacrament, thank-
sgiving, and rejoicing, and that it was conse-
crated, set apart, and sanctified to that end,
not by the visible Sun of this world, but by the
invisible Creator thereof; in his nineteenth
Sermon, de tempore, being the fiftieth
upon the day, and more plainly in his
twelfth Sermon, de tempore, and the eighth
upon the day, he saith,

*Filius Dei, idemq, filius hominis, sine Ma-
tre de patre natus, creavit omnem Diem,
sine patre de matre natus consecravit hunc
Diem, Divinâ nativitate invisibilis, humanâ
visibilis, utrâq, mirabilis,*

The Son of God, and the same the Son of
Man, one person, born of the Father with-
out a Mother, created every day, borne of
his

Augustine,
Anno 420
Preaching
on christ-
mas day.
Augustine
Anno 420

his Mother without a Father, consecrated this day; Invisible in his Birth Divine, visible in his Birth humane, wonderfull in both.

2. That he was borne upon the shortest day of the year, that is the day of the Winter Solstice, that was then upon the twenty fifth of December; he doth answer in his sixteenth Sermon, *de tempore*, and the twelfth upon the day, giving the reason why he was borne upon this day, *Quo die minor dies nullus interris*, then which no shorter shines upon Earth, because (saith he) he humbled himselfe into the meanest condition; therefore he chose the meanest and shortest day to be borne upon.

Christ
born on
the short-
est day in
the year.

3. That that day that he was borne upon was then the first day of the week, or our Sunday: in the night foregoing (the night being before the day, according to the Scriptures computation, *Gen. 1.*) December the twenty fifth, he testifieth in his Commentary upon the 132. *Psal*, in his fourth book, *de Trin. cap. 5.* and in the end of his nineteenth Sermon, *de tempore*, he gives the reason thereof in these words, *Diem in quo creavit lucem, Lux, in quo Crearetur ele-* that is to say, Christ the light, chose

Augustine,
Anno 410
Chr. born
upon Sun-
day.

that day to be created, or borne upon, in which he created the light i: selfe. And after him, of the same opinion is *Nicephorus*, *Eccl. Hist. l. 1. c. 12.* *Dominus Antonius* 12. parte *Hist. Tit. 5. cap. 10.* *Bonavent. de vita Christi*, *Petrus de Natalibus*, *Lucidus*, and divers others.

4. That the day of Christs Birth was every year kept holy by all Christians in his time, and that upon that day they were bound by speciall duty to receive the Sacrament of the *Le. Supper*, he doth most vehemently testify, and is line upon line, and precept upon precept, throughout his works to exhort them thereunto, as in his sixth and eighth Sermons, *de Natalitiis Christi*, his 26. *de tempore*, but in his 19. Epistle to *Jannarium* hee is more peremptory, for having spoken of keeping the Feasts of Easter, and Pentecost before, as if he were angry for forgetting the chief of all, he layes on with an *Hic primum oportet, ut die Nativitatis Domini Sacramentum Celebremus*, in memoriam illius qui natus est, & ipsum revolvamus anni Diem festa devotione celebrare.

It is our duty more than upon any day, to receive the Sacrament every yeare upon the Lords Birth-day, & to keep that day festive

Christs
Birth-day
a Sacra-
ment-day,
kept annu-
ally.

Ep. 128.

The day
bid holy
in St. Au-
gustines
time.

and holy. And further, in his first Sermon, de tempore, he bids the day, and gives the people warning to come to Church thereupon, and to prepare themselves in an especial manner, then to receive the Sacrament of his Body and Bloud: The forme of his bidding followes:

Augustine,
Anno 410
Serm. 2. in
Dom. 1. Ad-
ventus.

Appropinquante jam sacratissima solennitate, qua Salvator noster inter homines nasci misericorditer voluit, (Fratres Charissimi) attentius considerate, qualiter oporteat nos, in adventu tanta potentia preparari: ut Regem ac dominum nostrum leti atque gaudentes, cum gloria & laudibus mereamur suscipere, & in conspectu ejus inter felices cœtus Sanctorum, gratulando exultare, magis quam ab eo, propter sceleratam nostram repulsi inter peccatores aeternam confessionem mereri.

Et ideo rogo, moneoq, ut quantum possumus cum Dei adjutorio laboremur: ut illo die cum sincera, & pura conscientia, & mundo corde, & casto corpore, ad altare Domini possumus accedere, & corpus & sanguinem ejus non ad iudicium, sed ad remedium anime nostrae mereamur accipere (& Paulò post)

Licet nos omni tempore bonis operibus ornatos, ac splendidos esse conveniat, præ-

E 2

cipus

cipue in die Natalis Domini: Sicut in Evangelio docuit, Lucere debent hominibus opera vestra.

Most Dear Brethren, the most sacred solemnity now approaching, wherein our Saviour mercifully vouchsafed to be borne among us; consider more attentively: how we ought to prepare our selves for the advent of so great a Power, that we may be counted worthy to receive our Lord with joy and rejoycing, with glory and praise, and in his sight surmount in giving thanks in the midst of those happy Assemblies of the Saints, rather than suffering his repulse for our filthiness, deserve eternall confusion among sinners.

Therefore I exhort and give warning, that we labour with Gods help to our uttermost power, upon that day to come to the Lords Table with a sincere and pure conscience, a clean heart, and a chaste body, that we may be worthy to receive his body and blood, not to condemnation, but for our owne soules health. (And then a little after)

Though at all times we ought to be adorned, and beautified with good works, yet especially upon the Day of our Lords
Na-

Naivety, as we are taught in the Gospel, Mat. 5.14) ought our lights to shine before men, that they seeing our works may then glorifie our Father in Heaven.

The Father preacheth on, and I cannot chuse but take the notes and present them to you, they are so sweet. *Augustine,*
420.

Considerate quæso (Fratres) quando aliquis homo potens vel nobilis; Natalem suum, aut filii sui celebrare desiderat, quanto studio, ante plures Dies quicquid in domo sua sordidum invenerit ordiatur emundari, quicquid ineptum, & incongruum projici, quicquid utile & necessarium præcipit exhiberi. Domus etiam si obscurata fuerit dealbatur, Pavimenta scopis mundantur, & diversis respersa floribus ornantur; Quicquid etiam ad lætitiæ, & corporis delicias pertinet omni sollicitudine providetur. Ut quid ista (fratres charissimi) nisi ut Dies natalitius cum gaudio celebretur hominis morituri? Si ergo tanta preparas in Natalitio tuo, aut filii tui: quanta & qualia preparare debes Susceptoris Natalem Domini tui? Si talia preparas morituro, qualia preparare debes æterno?

Consider my Brethren, I beseech you, that when a great or noble man doth desire

Augustine,
Anno 420

to solemnize *his own* or *his Sons Birth-day*, with what eagernesse he gives his Servants order many dayes before to make cleane what shall be found foule in his house, to cast out what shall be found unfitting, or undecent, to provide what shall be profitable or necessary. The walls are whited, pavements washed, and strewed with fine flowres of diverse sorts, and whatsoever belongs to the merry-making of the soule, or the delighting of the body, are procured with all care. And to what end is all this great preparation (*my beloved Brethren*) but to grace and glad the Birth day of a mortall man? If then thou preparest so great and gay things upon thine owne Birth-day, or that of thy Sonne, how much greater and far more excellent oughtest thou to prepare against the Birth day of thy Lord? If thou preparest such things to honour him that shall die, what manner of provision oughtest thou to make in honour of him that lives forever?

Therefore whatsoever thou wouldst be sorry to have found in thine owne house in the day of thine owne Nativity, have a care that God may not finde the like

in thy soule, upon the Birth-day of his onely Sonne.

The Father goes on, *Certe si te Rex terr-* Augustine,
renus, aut quicunq, pater-familias ad Na- 42c.
talitium suum invitaret, qualibus vestimen-
tis studueris ornatus incedere, quam novis, vel
nitidis, vel splendidis, quorum nec vetustus, nec
vilitas, nec aliqua seditas, oculos invitantis of-
fenderet? Tali ergo studio in quantum preuales,
Christo auxiliante, contende, ut diversis vir-
tutum ornamentis anima composita, Simplici-
tatis gemmis, & sobrietatis floribus adornata,
ad solennitatem Regis eterni: id est, ad Na-
talem Domini Salvatoris, cum secunda consci-
entia procedat, castitate nitida, charitate splen- Augustine,
did, elemosynis candida. Christus enim do-
minus, si te ita compositum natalitium suum
celebrare cognoverit: Ipse per se venire,
& animam tuam non solum visitare, sed
etiam requiescere, & perpetuo in illa digna-
bitur habitare. Sicut 2 Cor. 6. Apoc. 3. 20.
Et quam felix est ista anima que vitam su-
am ita, deo auxiliante, studuerit gubernare,
ut Christum hospitem & habitatorem merea-
tur accipere!

Certainly if an earthly King, or any House-keeper, should invite thee to the Feast

2 Cor. 6.
Rev. 3. 20.

of his *Nativity*, thou wouldst care to cloath thy selfe with such new, neat, and gallant attire, of which neither the oldnesse, courtenesse, or foulnesse, might offend the eyes of him that invited thee. Do thou strive then, by the help of *Christ*, as much as possible thou canst, to adorne thy selfe with divers vertuous ornaments, as the Jewels of simplicity, and the Flowers of sobriety, against the great Solemnity of the *Eternal King*, that is to say the *Birth-day* of our Lord and Saviour, that thy soule may draw near with a safe Conscience, purified by chastity, shining through charity, and made white with almes-deeds. For if *Christ thy Lord* doe know that thou being thus fitted, doest sanctifie his *Birth-day* in this composure: hee will come unto thee himselfe, and will not onely vouchsafe to visite thy soule, but to take up his rest and dwell therein; and how happy is the soul of that man, who by Gods assistance, so orders his life, that hee may be counted worthy to have *Christ* for his guest and inmate: So much shall suffice to have glanced out of this *holy Father*, for the clearing of this particular.

The next is *Orosius*, *St. Augustines* Scholar,
lar,

lar, and afterwards a Priest in Spain, about the years 425. who writ seven Books of History, which he dedicated to his foresaid Master, in the seventh and second Chapter, affirming the very same things, concerning the honour, time, and day of Christs Birth that his Master did before him, that it was on the twenty fifth of December.

Paulus
Orosius,
Anno 425

In the same age flourished Cassianus, a Priest of Massilia in France, Anno 440. who testifieth the very same, and agrees with the former; who further speaking of the Egyptians, who did (as hee affirmes) antiqua traditione, by ancient tradition, observe the day of the Epiphany, in remembrance both of Christs Birth and Baptisme, addes, that they did not disapprove the different custome of the Westerne Christians, who kept it on the 25. of December.

Cassianus
Anno 440

And with him accords Nicéphorus, Hist. Eccl. lib. 1. c. 12 saying, Viginti & quintus tum mensis Decembris, erat Dies quam ineffabile pietatis, & amoris, erga genus humanum tua (Verbum Dei) maximūq; inerrabilis partus perficitur mysterium. It was then the 25. of December, when

when thou, O Word of God, the unspeakable mystery of thy goodnesse and love towards mankinde, and the exceeding great Birth was accomplished. Following Maximus Bishop of Tours in France, of the same time with Leo the great, who hath six Sermons preached upon the day, extant: And Chrysologus who hath one, Section 172.

Leo Magn. Leo the Great, Bishop of Rome in the
Anno 430 time also, an holy and famous man, that sat at the sterne of that Church for almost one and twenty yeares, hath tenne Sermons preached upon the day; in the first whereof hee proves the point, saying,

Servator noster hodie natus est, quodamus, neque fas est locum esse tristitie, Natalis est vita, qua consumpto mortalitatis timore, nobis ingerit de promissa eternitate letitiam. Nullus ab hujus alacritatis participatione

Leo Magn. *Secernitor, una cunctis communis letitie est ratio.*
Anno 440

A day of joy,

Our Saviour was borne this day, let us be glad: It is not lawfull to give place to sadness on the Birth-day of life, which taking away the feare of death, prompts us to us the joy of promised Eternity.

no man dare to separate himselfe from
the partaking of this dayes rejoycing, seeing
there is the same universall ground of joy
to all.

And againe in his second Sermon.

*Exulemus, quia nobis illuxit Dies redemp-
tionis nostrae, reparationis antiquae, felicitatis
eternae. Reparatur enim nobis salutis no-
strae annua revolutione Sacramentum; in ini-
tio promissum, in fine redditum, sine fine man-
surum.*

A Sacra-
ment-day
in Leo's
time.

Let us rejoyce because this day of our re-
demption, ancient reparation and eternall
happinesse doth shine within our doores,
for as this day, the Sacrament or Seale of
our salvation is renewed unto us by the
yeares revolution; which was promised
in the beginning of time, performed in
the fulnesse of time, and continued when
time shall be no more. So much he, shewing
in his time the strict annuall observation of
the day.

In the same age, and at the same time
did live and flourish.

Cyrill of Alexandria, President of the
Councell of Ephesus, against Nestorius, *Cyrl.
Alex. 430
Theodorus.*
Anno 430.

432.

Theodoret of Cyprius.

Prosper

Prosper,
445.
Vigilius,
495.

Prosper of Aquitaine, in the year 445. And
Vigilius, who flourished about the year
495, in whose days the formentioned Feast
was kept *universally, constantly, annually.*

Thus have we proved by sufficient witness-
nesses, whom none will or can deny, but
they who believe none but themselves, the
point in hand, for five hundred yeares after
Christ, for which time the Church of God
continued a *Virgin*, without any notable
spot or blemish, and *Apostolicall*; now she
began to be defiled, her beauty to be spotted,
yet she did never so farre fall away,
from her first Love, Jesus Christ, in any
place where she wandered, as not to fol-
low the example of those purer times, and
forementioned Christians, and every yeare
holily to observe the Feast of our Saviour
Nativity. Nay, I believe the thanklesse ad-
versary will willingly grant so much, be-
cause hee would make it like every thing
which his Ignorance dislikes, a piece of popu-
lery; but what hath beene said already
hath prevented that objected popperie, and
the Chu: of Rome is to be commended for
the observing of the same, and all men to
joyne with them therein.

It shall suffice then, for every hundred
yeare

are following, to bring in one witnesse or
till the time of the *Fathers* be fulfilled,
prove the generall continuance of this
religious observance.

In the sixth Century then, we meet with
Rupertus, the *Apostle* of *Bavaria*, famous
the yeare 580. who in his third Book,
divinis officiis, and cap 16. witnesseth the
observation of the day in that age,
saith, that Christ was borne *Nocte do-*
minica, in the preceding night, or about the
evening of the *Lords* day. And the reason
saith he, *Ut quo dei dixit fiat lux, &*
illa est, lux ejusdem die, nocte oriretur in
obscuris lumen erectis corde, & visitaret nos
hominis ab alto: illuminare eos qui in tene-
bris & in umbra mortis sedebant.

Rupertus,
Anno 480

Christ
borne a-
bout day-
break.

That upon what day he said, *Let there*
be light, and there was light, in the night of
that day light should spring out of dark-
ness to the upright in heart, and the morning
should visit us from on high, to give light to
them that sate in darknesse, and in the shadow
and death. To this alludes that of *S. John*,
for no doubt to the hour of Christs Birth,
the light shined in darknesse, and the darknesse
comprehended it not.

Isa. 9. 2.

Luke. 2. 9.

John 1. 9.

John 1. 5.

In this age also, before him flourished

Ful

Fulgentius, *Fulgentius of Carthage*, about the beginning of the Century, who hath one Sermon extant in honour of the day.

Isidor. *Isidorus Junior*, of *Hispania* in Spain, after him, about the yeare 596. And

Evagrius. *Evagrius Scholasticus*, who writ his Ecclesiasticall History, ending in the year 597. And

Greg. Mag. *Gregory the Great*, who lived at the same time, to whose workes I referre you. But especially, take notice, that in this age about the yeare 523. *Justine*, the Emperour of the East, decreed that the Feast of the holy Nativity of Christ, should be observed, as *Nicephorus* observes, *Hist. Eccl.* l. 7. c. 28. If any one object, that therefore was not kept before, he may as well argue that the Lords day was never kept in England before this Parliament sate, because they have made a blessed Act for the strict observance of the same.

Bede, 700. For the next Century, from the year 600 to 700. we shall produce *Bede* our own Countrey-man, who was famous in this age and hath writ to the purpose in this particular; (I meane venerable *Bede*) and fully, that he hath delivered in a few words all that hath bin said before, especially concerning

erning the time when Christ was borne, to give you a tast, which will relish well with discreet pallate.

He in the 19. cap. lib. 1. *De natura rerum*, Bede. relating that definitive sentence of his forefathers, that Christ was *Conceptus Equino-dio verno, natus Solstitio hyberno*, conceived in the Vernal Equinox, and born in the Winter Solstice, hath these words:

De Equinoctiis quod octavo Calendarum Aprilium 1. 25. Martii, & octavo Calendarum Octobrium (1) 24. Septembris, & de Solstitiis octavo Calendarum Juliarum. id est, 24. die Junii, & octavo Calendarum Januariarum, id est, 25. Decembris, notanda sint. Multorum latè, & sapientum Seculi, & Christianorum sententia claret.

Concerning the Equinoctials, that they are to be placed on the eight of the Calends of *Aprill*, that is, upon the 25. day of *March*, and upon the eighth of the Calends of *October*, that is, upon the 24. day of *September*; and concerning the Solstices, that they are to be placed, the one upon the eighth day of the Calends of *July*, that is, upon the 24. day of *June*, and the other upon the eighth day of the Calends of *January*, that is, upon the 25. of *December*,

Mark this well.

ber, is the definitive sentence of diverse Doctors, both *Heathen* and *Christian*, over the whole world.

Bede 700.

He then brings in, first the testimonies of *Plynie*, and *Hippocrates*, those *Heathens*, then adds, that all the famousst Fathers of the Church are of the same opinion, in affirming, that *Christ our Lord* was conceived upon the eighth day of the Calends of *April*, which is the same day with the 25. of our *March*, the day of the *Vernall Equinox*, and that upon that very day he also suffered, and died, and that he was borne upon the day of the *winter Solstice*, upon the eighth of the Calends of *January*, that is to say, upon the twenty fifth day of our *December*.

Bede.

As also, that *John the Baptist*, his forerunner, was conceived upon the eighth of the Calends of *October*, which is all one with the twenty fourth of *September*, the day of the *Autumnall Equinotiall*, and was borne upon the day of the *Somer Solstice*, being then upon the eighth of the Calends of *July*, according to that times account, which according to ours is the 24. day of *June*, adding this exposition, that it was meet that the *Author of life Eternal*, should

should both be conceived, and borne in the
increase of light temporall: and that the *Prea-
cher of Repentance*, who ought to be lessened
with the lessening of the light, should at
such a time of diminution both be concei-
ved and borne, according to that saying
of *St. John* himselfe, *John 3. 30. He must in-
crease, but I must decrease.*

And again, in his *Homily upon the Nati-
vity of John the Baptist*, he saith, that it is
not without a great mystery that *John* was
born when the day did decrease, and *Christ*
when the day did increase; for *Christ* did
decrease, because it was to bee knowne over
all the world, that he was *Christ*. *John* did,
and must decrease, because he was thought
to be *Christ*, being onely his fore-runner:
and by very good right it was, that the
shortened day should gain length when *Christ*
was born, because God before being onely
knowne in *Jury*; now *Christ* appeared to
be a light to lighten the *Genittles*, and to
spread abroad the heat of his love over the
whole earth.

And moreover, it is apparent, that
though *Bede* in one place doth not seem to
approve of the strictnesse of that sentence, *Bede*,
that our *Saviour Christ* should be pre-

F

cisely

Bede.

cifely borne on the day of the winter solstice, yet it is manifest that he doth not go from it, by his words that follow descending upon the time.

Hoc tempore in infimum Celi punctum Sol devenit, Justitiæ vero Sol Christus, in infimum Orbis locum præsepe descendit. At this time the Sun of this world did decline to the lowest point in the Heavens, and Christ the Son of righteousness did descend into the Manger, the meanest and lowest place on earth.

Hoc tempore reverti incipit ad nos Sol, accipiuntq; dies nostri incrementum lucis, et per Christi nativitatem Sol justitiæ ad nos conversus est, lux vero gratiæ magnis operibus aucta incrementis, secundum illud, John 1. 7, 8, 9. Johannes non erat illa lux, lux erat sua decrescens, mixta tenebris, non illa lux id est, Christus, lux clara, incrementum recipiens.

John 1. 6, 7, 8, 9. At this time the Sun begins to return to us, and our dayes receive their increase of light. Upon the day of Christs Nativity the Sun of righteousness came and rose upon us, and the light of grace received great increase; John was not that light, but was a light indeed, but a decreasing one.

mixt with darknesse ; but *Christ* was that *light*, that cleare *light*, increasing unto perfect day.

So much our venerable Countrey-man, making it cleare unto us, that the day of the winter *solstice*, and the eighth of the Calends of *January*, and the twenty fifth day of *Decemb.* were all one and the same day ; that our Saviour was borne thereupon, and that it was kept holy in the remembrance thereof, over the whole world by Gods Children in their severall ages ; and throughout the dayes that he lived in.

For the next Century. we produced *John Johanneo Damascen*, who flourished about the year *Damascen*, 731. and is a witnesse of the generall observation of this day, from 700. to 800. who was equall to *Bede* ; and as *Bede* did witnesse for the *West*, so hee for the *East*.

For the next Century, extending to the year 900. we shall produce

Rabanus Maurus, Abbot of *Fulda*, and afterward Bishop of *Mentz*, and President of the great Synod there, held under *Lotharius* the Emperour, for convicting of *Godescalcus*, Anno 848. He was a man,

Tanta Eruditionis, ut nec similem Italia, nec parem Germania habuerit.

Haymo,
850.

Haymo, Bishop of Halberstadt, Kinsman to Bede, and Schollar to Alcuinus our Coun-
treymen.

Theophylact
An. 880.

Theophylact, Arch-Bishop of Bulgaria, in his Commentaries upon Luke, all which did flourish in this Century.

Occumenius
1070.

For the next Century, and the next following, till the year 1070. wee bring in Occumenius a Greek Father, famous in that dark age.

Bernard,
1120.
Preaching
on Christ-
mas-Day

For the next, mellifluous St. Bernard, the last of all the Fathers, who though he lived in the time of the School-men, whose beginning wee reckon from the year 1050. (of whom Lanfranke, Arch-Bishop of Canterbury, was the first) yet hee is reckoned for the Father, and gives us a cleare testimony of the due observation of the day, in an especiall manner, for this time, in those many Sermons that hee preached thereupon.
As,

Bernard,
1120.

In his first Sermon, *Grandis quidem (dilectissimi) est hodierna dominica Nativitatis solennitas, sed Dies brevis cogit abbreviare Sermonem, nec mirum si nos facimus breve verbum, quia hodie deus Pater verbum fecit abbreviatum.*

Great

Great (*my dearly Beloved*) is the solemnization of the *day of our Lords Nativity*. But the shortnesse of the day will compell me to make a short Sermon; and no marvel, seeing the Father did as this day, shorten or abbreviate the *Word*.

Again in his second Sermon, he puts the Question, why he was borne in the winter, in the night, in such cold weather, in the darke? Shall (saith he) we believe that it was done by chance?

He answers, Other Children do not chuse the time when they shall bee borne, because they have no use of reason, liberty of choyce, faculty of deliberation; but *Christ*, although hee was Man, was in the beginning with the *Father*: He was then God, the same in wisdom and power that he is now, as being the power and wisdom of God: therefore he the *Son of God*, being about to be borne, in whose power it was, to chuse what time he pleased, he chose that which was most troublesome, chiefly for a little Child, and the Son of a poore Mother, who scarce had any clouts to wrap him in, to shew that he was not from the Earth, but from Heaven.

Much more might be collected out of
 F 3 the

the works of this holy Father, but so much may suffice.

Thus have we have proved by the testimony of so many Fathers, men famous in their generations, that for almost twelve hundred years, the day of Christs Birth was kept constantly, annually, universally, by all Christians over the whole world, religiously, holily, and that upon the twenty fifth day of December, according as it hath beene the custome of the Church of England, following the Reformed Churches. ancient and laudable custome of the Primitive Church,

The corrupt time of the Church follows from the forementioned time till the year 1517. when the Church began to be reformed in divers Nations, yet shee did never in the time of her corruption, so far fall away from the love of her Saviour, as not to keep the day of his Birth.

We come therefore in the next place, to prove, that all the Protestant Churches beyond the Seas, ever since the Reformation, have in their severall Congregations, religiously kept the Feast of our Saviours Nativity, according to the use of the Primitive Church, upon the 25. day of December, and have accounted it, and maintained it to

be their duty so to doe; and not onely the
Fest of the Nativity, but of the *Circumcisi-*
on, *Passion*, *Resurrection*, *Ascension*, and
Pentecost, as is manifested at large in the
Harmony of their Confessions, lately printed
 in English, to which I refer the English
 Reader: As also by their severall *Confessi-*
ons, generall *Practise*, and the *Testimonies* of
 of their reverend and learned Divines.

First for the Cncessions.

We shall not urge the words of every Confessi-
 one of them in particular, because it ons.
 would bee too tedious, and because they
 are the same in substance, and the grounds
 and reasons of each accord: Two or three
 therefore of the chief shall suffice.

And the first shall bee the *Augustane Augustana*.
 Confession, exhibited to the Emperour, A^o. 1530.

CHARLES the fifth, in the year 1530.

The words whereof in the fourth Article, Confessi-
 ons.
 are as followeth.

Docemus non damnandas esse traditiones,
que nihil precipiunt contra mandata Dei &
habent finem politicum, videlicet, que ad hoc
condita sunt, ut ordine res in ecclesia geran-
tur: Cujusmodi sunt, traditiones de feriis,

Natali, Paschate, & reliquis, & hujus generis veteres ritus libenter retinemus in nostra Ecclesia.

We teach (say they) that we ought not to condemne those traditions, which appoint nothing contrary to Gods Commandements, and have a civil use, or end, to wit, for good order in the Church: such are the traditions concerning Holy dayes, Christs Birth day, Easter, and the rest; and those ancient customes we willingly retain in our Churches.

Bohemica.

An. 1532.

The second shall be the Bohemian Confession, published in the year 1532. cap. 16.

Servamus Dominicos festos Dies, illosq; eximiarum Feriarum Dies, qui consecrati sunt celebrationi operum Christi, Nativitati, Cruciatibus, Resurrectioni, &c. Itemq; Memoriz Sanctorum, ut Virginis Mariæ, Apostolorum, aliorumq; Sanctorum, &c. & hec quidem propter Verbum Dei, & cultus Divini causa, propterq; gloriam Dei à nobis fiant.
That is to say,

We keep the Lords Day holy, and those chiefe Festivals which are consecrated to the Commemoration of Christs works, his Nativity, Passion, Resurrection, &c. Also those which are consecrated to the

the memory of *Saints*; as of the Virgin *Mary*, the *Apostles*, and other *Saints*, especially of those of whom mention is made in holy writ. All these things are done of us, by the authority of Gods Word, and in worship of God, and for his glory.

The third shall be the latter Confession *Helvetica* of *Helvetia*, published in the yeare 1566. *Posterior* which was subscribed by all the Churches 1566. of *Sabaudia*, *Poland*, *Hungarie*, and revolted *Scotland*, as *Alsted* doth witness in the 37. chap. of his *Cronologie*, pag. 392. edit. ult. 1650.

They in their 24. chap. tell us thus much, *Scots sub-*
Si Ecclesia pro Christiana libertate memori- scribing to
am Dominicæ Nativitatis. Circumcisionis, the keep-
Passionis Resurrectionis, Ascensionis in ex- ing of
lum, & Missionis Spiritus Sancti in Discipu- Christmas
los Religiose celebrent, maximopere approba- Day.
mus. That is,

If the Churches, according to their Christian liberty, do, or shall religiously celebrate the memory of our *Lords Nativity*, *Circumcision*, *Passion*, *Resurrection*, *Ascension into Heaven*, and sending of the *Holy Ghost upon the Disciples*; wee doe in an especiall manner approve of it.

Note here I pray you, to the *Scots* everlasting

everlasting shame, that all the Churches or Kirks of Scotland, did subscribe this Confession of Helvetia, and that now at this day they generally speak against the keeping of *Christs Birth-day*. How true then is our Northerne Proverb, *As false as a Scot*? No marvell then, if they sold their King, that thus slight their Faith, and despise the coming of the King of Kings.

Christmas-day a Communion-day in Scotland for 800. yeares.

Nay more, they have herein with *Ephesus* forsaken their first love; for if we read the life of *Will: Cowper*, Bish. of Galloway, in the 12. p. we may find, that the *Scottish Church* for 800. yeares after *Christ*, did give the Communion upon the 25. day of *Decemb.* by them accounted the day of *Christs Nativity*: which is also avouched by *Mr. Ley*, in his *Sunday a Sabbath*. p. 173.

With these forementioned Confessions, agree all the rest, as that of the four Cities, *Argentine*, *Constance*, *Mumminge*, and *Lindavia*, called by some, the Confession of *Sweetland*, published in the yeare 1530. That of *Basil*, 1531. that of *Saxonic*, 1551. that of *Whitemberge*, 1552. that of *France*, 1559. that of *Germany*, 1556.

Add to these the joynt answer of the Protestants, in the yeare 1541. with the consent

consent of all the Reformed Churches of Poland, the greater and the lesse; also the Churches of *Russia, Litmania, Samogitia* in that famous Synod of *Sandimora* in the year 1570. *Denmark, Sweden*, and all the *Lutherans*, as appears by *Luthers Hymns* sung by them upon the day.

Adde lastly to them all the late Nationall Scottish Covenant, wherein the words that are to be vowed, protested, and sworn by them that take it; are,

That they shall endeavour the reformation of the Church of England, in Doctrin, Discipline, and Worship, according to Gods Word, and Example, and Practise, of the best reformed Churches.

Scottish
Covenant
Art. I.

Now all the best reformed Churches keepe the day of Christs Birth, as a day of holy worship, and thanksgiving, even all of them at this day, and ever since their reformation.

Then, I beseech you note, that whosoever he be, or whether a faithlesse *Scotts-man*, or a *Scottified English-man*, that hath taken

The note
keeping of
Christmas

taken

Day is a
breach of
the Cove-
nant.

taken that Covenant, and doth not endea-
vour, and labour yearly to keep holy the
twenty fifth day of December, or the annuall
day of Christs Nativity, is in plain English,
and gu'd Scotch, absolutely forsworne,
for not worshipping God and Christ there-
upon, in the publick Congregation, as
they of the best reformed Churches doe.

Moderne
Divines.

In the next place, we adde the testimo-
ny of the best and most famous Divines of
those Reformed Churches, who concerning
the keeping of these Festivals, stoutly
maintaine, both by Scripture and Rea-
son, what their Churches delivered in
their Confessions. I shall name onely the
chiefe.

Calvinus,

First, Calvin, *Instit. lib. 4. cap. 10.* In
verba Augustin. approves the keeping of
them, and in his Epistle to *Hallerus*, sor-
rowes very much that these Festivall dayes
were put downe in diverse places. And
moreover for the day of Christs Birth, he

Notior fuit
Christi-Na-
tivities
quam ut in
questionem
vocari de-
beat.

saith and avoucheth, *Harm. Evangel. in*
cap secundum Lucæ, that the day of Christs
Birth was better knowne than that it should
now be called in question; and calls the A-
nabaptists that question it, *Aerii Demones*,
Airie Divels, And accordingly the Church

of

of Geneva doth annually celebrate it, as we may read in *Perths Assembly confuted*, p. 85. And in *France*, their most notable Preachers give the Communion on that day.

Moderne
Divines,

Secondly, *Zanchie*, that treasurer of learning and knowledge, *Vol. 4. lib. 1. cap. 19. in quart. præcep. thesifsecunda*, proves at large, that it was kept holy in the purer times, and that it ought to be so kept, and yearly observed by all true Christians at this day, by sound Reasons which you shall read anon.

Thirdly, *Zuinglius*, Rector of the Church of *Zurich*, accounts the *Birth-day* of our Lord among those holy-daves that he would have observed. *Tom. 1. Art. 25*

Fourthly, *Bullinger*, *Decad. 2. Serm. 4.* saith, *Quamvis nullibi legatur, &c.* Though it is no where read, that the *Lords day* was enjoined in the writings of the Apostles; yet because in the fourth Commandement of the first Table the care of Religion, and the diligent exercise of outward worship is commanded, it were contrary to piety, and Christian charity, not to sanctifie the *Lords Day*, especially seeing that outward worship cannot consist, without a set time, and an holy rest: the same we ought to

to judge of the holy-dayes, or Feasts of our Lord Christ, in which we celebrate the memory of his Nativity, Incarnation, Circumcision, Passion, Resurrection, Ascension into Heaven, and sending downe of the holy Ghost upon his Disciples.

Fifthly, Polanus, professor of Divinity in the Universitie of Basil, placeth the Feast of Christs Nativity, under the title of *The Anniversary Feasts of the New Testament*; which he defines to be holy times appointed among Christians for the worship of God in publike; that is, To maintaine the consent of faith among themselves, for the Preaching of Gods word, and the use of the Sacraments, and with one accord to yeild due worship unto God in the due Sacrifice of thanksgiving, Prayers, and Alms. *Synag. Theolog. lib. 9. c. 35.*

Sixthly, John Gerhard Professor of Divinity in the University of Jena, who hath gathered together many godly sentences out of the ancient Fathers, for the furtherance, and help of our meditations on the day of Christs Nativity.

Reasons.

And what should we say more? For the time would faile us, to tell of Melancthon, in *Responsione Protestantium. Festum Homini*.

Hemmingius, in the name of all the reformed Churches, *Coll: Antibellar: disp: 41. thesi* 3. Of *Bucer* in *Matth. cap. 12. loco de feriis*. Of *Ursin*, *Traët. Theol. in 4. precep.* Of *Hemmingius lib. hom.* Of *Chytraeus* in *disposit. Epistol. sub initio*. Of our Countreyman *Hooker*, *Eccl. pol. l. 5.* Of famous *Andrews*, in his Sermons; Of learned *Reynolds*, in his Conference with *Hart*, c. 8. *divis. secunda*, and many others, famous for piety and learning, who by their Sermons, Writings, Examples, have justified the yearly observation of *Christs Birth-Day*, upon the 25. of *December*, grounding upon the word of God, the traditions of the Apostles, and the practice of the Primitive and Reformed Churches.

Next to the Practice of Gods Church, Reason comes in as an Armed man, to confirme the truth, and to maintaine the particular observation of the forementioned day. The reasons are many, for brevity sake we shall onely for the present alledge three, which *Zanchie*, that great Treasurer of Learning, and Religion, doth prompt unto us in the forecited place.

His first Reason is drawne, *A laudabili*. Because it is praise-worthy to observe this Ratio 1. day,

day, grounded upon the chiefe ends for which *Feasts* were instituted among the *Jewes* which are three, as *Thomas Aquinas* recites them, 2. parte *Summe*, quæst. 102. art. 4.

Reasons.

The first, That they might remember the works of the Lord, and the blessings that at such times they had received.

The second, To give God thanks for them.

The Third, That at such times they might freely offer large gifts, for the reliefe of the Priests, and poor people.

If therefore (saith he) for the Commemoration of such benefites and blessings at such times bestowed by God, *Feasts* were instituted among the *Jewes*; why then should any man dare to affirme, that the *Church of Christ* may not also institute, and keep the *Feasts* that we have mentioned, that by observing those *solemne dayes*, those blessings may be kept in mind, which we have received from the bounty of *Iesus Christ*, and the famous works which he upon those dayes did performe for us, the certaine Historicall relation whereof we have in the *Evangelists*.

Therefore, upon such *Festivali dayes*,
seeing

seeing they are to be kept holy in remembrance of such benefits receiv'd from *Christ*, and of all that he did and suffered for us, the Histories of those particulars ought to be read, and explained to the people, which the ancient *Primitive Church* was alawaies wont to doe; wherefore (saith he) I doe utterly condemne those *Ministers*, who upon such dayes doe strictly prosecute their ordinary Texts, that if upon *Easter day* a Text of *Christs Passion*, doe come in their way, they will explain that, and will by no means chuse any of those that make mention of the *Resurrection*.

His second Reason is drawne, *Ab honesto*, Ratio 2.
 We ought to solemnize the *Feast of our Saviours Nativity*, and those other of his *Resurrection*, &c. Because it is a point of honesty so to doe; for if that be honest (as *Cicero* defines it) which though it bee not actually praised, yet it is praise-worthy, it must needs follow, that it is a point of honesty, to solemnize those *Feasts* which the ancient *Church* graced with a solemnity before us; because it is a point of honesty, and praise-worthy to follow antiquity in things not evil in themselves, but indifferent; for it ought to be our judgment,

ment, that the ancients had a sufficient, and a well grounded cause for the doing of such things, especially in the instituting and appointing of such Festivall dayes.

Ratio 3^a.

His third Reason is drawn, Ab utili, VVee ought (saith hee) to keepe holy the Birth-day of our Saviour, and his other Feasts, by reason of the great profit that accrewes unto us, and others in the observation of the same: For it is not (saith he) in the tongue of man to expresse what great profit the common people do gaine by the due observing of those dayes, and coming to Church to give God thanks thereupon; whereupon the passages of those things that were done by our Saviour, for the good and salvation of their soules, are read and explained unto them, and a treasure of good things are begot in them. Let me add, all the Articles of the Creed, are in a manner every year more and more made known unto them; and they upon every Festivall built up in their most holy faith, and that increased by the annuall Exposition, and confirmation, they being taught to believe in God, that made Heaven and Earth, by his Sonne, by whom he made the World, Jesus Christ his onely Sonne

Annuntiation.

our

our Lord, who was *Conceived by the holy Ghost*, upon the day of the *Annuntiation*, upon which day the world was created. March. 25.

To believe that he was *Borne of the Vir. gin Mary*, upon the *Feast of his Nativity*. Decem. 25.

That he *Suffered under Pontius Pylate*, *Good-*
was crucified dead and buried, and descended *Friday*
into Hell, upon the day of his *Passion*.

That the third day He rose again from the *Easter*
dead, and that we by vertue of his *Resur-*
rection shall rise againe at the last day, and
have everlasting life after death, upon the
Feast of his Resurrection.

That he *Ascended into Heaven*, & sits at the *Holy-*
right hand of God, & shall come again to judge *Thursday*
both quick and dead upon the *Feast of his*
Ascension.

That he sent downe the *holy Ghost*, the *Whit-sun-*
Comforter, to gather unto him an *Holy day*
Catholick Church, in which he would esta-
blish a *Forgivenesse of sins*, and a *Communion*
of *Saints*, upon the *Feast of Pentecost*.

Behold the form of sound words, which we 2 Tim. 1. 13
are to hold fast, and the body of that faith
without which our soules cannot be sa-
ved, delivered upon these *Festivals*; so that Gal. 4. 19.
by the labour and industry of *Ortho-*

- doxe and painefull Ministers, Christ Iesus may day by day bee formed in the hearts and foules of their people, they yearly with
- Gal. 4.19. St. Paul travelling in Birth of them; may make them so grow in grace, and the
- 2 Pet. 3.18 knowledge of the LORD IESUS, that they may bring them up at last to be perfect men and women in him. Begetting them at the Conception, bringing them forth new creatures upon the Nativity, cutting off the fore skin of their hearts at the Circumcision, enlightning their mindes, and bringiug them out of darknesse into his marvellous light,
- Gal. 5. 24. upon the Epiphanie; teaching them to crucifie their affections and lusts, on Good-
- Col. 3.1. Friday, and to rise to newnesse of life on Easter-day; to set their affections upon things above, where Christ sits at the right hand
- Reasons. of God, upon Holy Thursday, that hee may send downe the Holy Ghost into their hearts, to leade them into all truth, upon the day of Pentecost, and into this truth above others, that they kisse the Son of God upon the day of his Nativity, and so they perish not from the right way, which (with griefe of heart I write it) too many have done that have neglected the Celebration of this Blessed Day. Alas, alas how many poor unlearned

unlearned people are there, that cannot read any thing concerning *Christ*, or what they are to believe concerning him, nor hear any thing of *Christ*, but when they come to Church upon such Festival days.

Let mee adde another Reason also, that wee should keep these Days holy, and that a grand one; It is that we may give no offence to the weaker Brethren, who if the observation of these dayes should be laid aside, and we should contemne and despise the keeping of them, those poore ignorant soules would be verily perswaded that we did not care for, nor regard those great things that *Christ* either did or suffered for us, and that we did not count them worth the thanksgiving.

Rom. 14.
I Cor. 8. 13

I conclude my Reasons with the words of St. *Augustine*; *Post Sacras literas ea nobis servanda sunt, quæ vel ab Apostolis per traditionem, vel ab universalibus Conciliis definita fuisse judicantur*; Talia autem sunt quæ, toto terrarum orbe, leguntur observata fuisse, qualia sunt hæc festa veteris puriorisq; ecclesiæ, quæ omnia fuerunt de *Christo*, scilicet *Diei Dominici*, *Paschatis*, *Pentecostes*, *Ascensionis*, *Passionis*, *Cœnæ Domini*, & *Nativitatis*.

Next after the holy Scriptures, we are to observe those Rites and Customs, which came either from the Apostles by Tradition, or are judg'd to be decreed by generall Counsels; such are those Feasts of the ancient and purer Church, annually observed over the whole World, all which were kept in the honour of Jesus Christ: to wit, the Lords Day, Easter, Pentecost, Ascension, Passion, Supper of the Lord, and the Nativity.

Give mee leave to adde the words of worthy Zanchy, concerning the particular Feast of the Birth-day of our Saviour CHRIST, and then I shall have almost done.

Zanchie,
loc. Citato.

Wee know (saith hee in the forecited place) that it was a received custome among all Nations to celebrate the Birth day of every particular Man, how meane soever, especially of Princes and Great Ones, as of Herod, of which we reade in the Gospel, and that not without reason, for it is an especial blessing that any one created by God, in the womb of his Mother, should be brought alive into this world; therefore as God would have the Sabbath to be kept holy, in remembrance of the creation of the world, that thanks might be given to the

Creator

Creator for so great a benefit; so it must needs be a piece of great thankfulness too, & well accepted of Almighty God, that any man shall keep in memory the day that he was born, and regard and honour it more than other dayes, in rejoycing thereupon, giving thanks to God, soberly feasting with his Neighbours, and giving more largely to the poor, than at other times.

How much more ought the day of our Saviour's Birth, in a more excellent, devout, and rejoycing manner, annually to be observed and kept by all that beare the name of Christian, and hope for salvation by that Blessed Babe, that now came into the World to save sinners, whereof they must needs be the chiefe that despise the day of so great Salvation; work, and follow their Callings, when it should bee their onely work to remember what the Lord Jesus upon this day did for them, and sing praise to his name. 1 Tim. 1. 15.

Methinks what hath beene said already, might perswade any reasonable Christian to the due observation of the day. But alas, I finde of late, Jewes in England, to whom Christ came and they received him not, Isa. 5. 11.

John 1. 11. Who unless they see signes

and wonders; they will not believe; and then neither; so stupid they are, and obstinate; yet whether they will heare, or whether they will forbear, whether they will believe or continue in unbelief, and believe no man but themselves; let them know, that divers and sundry Miracles have beene wrought in divers Nations, upon the twenty fifth day of December, to confirme it to have beene the very day of our Saviours Birth; as the Fountaine of Oyle breaking out in Rome, the tongue-tying of the Devils Oracles, the amity of the Beasts, and many more, which you may finde in *Gregory Taronenfis*, which I may not now repeat; but especially two wrought here in England, confirming that the keeping of the day upon the 25. of the aforesaid Moneth, according to the old Julian account, is authentick, true, and Orthodox.

Oak in the
new For-
est.

The one is the *Oake* in the new Forrest, *Sacra Jovi Quercus*, an Oak consecrate to the Son of God, left as a lasting witness of this truth, even there, where so many Churches were demolished; wherein it should have been preached. *Abraham* the Father of the Faithfull, feasted the Son of God in the likenesse of *Mam* even *Abraham* that

Gen. 18.8.

that rejoyced to see his day, and saw it, *Joh. 8.56.*
 and was glad, under the *Oake of Mamre*,
 and this *Oake* so long after desires to shew
 unto the faithfull, the day of his *Incarna-*
tion, and to solemnize the same by wea-
 ring every yeare upon this very day, new and
 greene leaves upon it: as shewing to poste-
 rity, That as this day Truth sprung out of the
 earth of *Mary's Womb*, and *Righteousnesse* *Psalm. 35. 11.*
 looked down from Heaven; signifying also,
 that in his dayes the righteous should flou- *Psalm. 72.*
 rish, and that hee should grow up as a tender
 Plant in a dry ground, his fruit should shake *Verse 16.*
 like *Lebanon*, and bee greene as grasse upon
 the earth; that he is the chiefe of our
 strength, and that as the leaves, barke, and
 fruit of that Tree, are all *Medicinall*, so
 should *Christ* bee that *Tree of Life*, *Re-*
velations 22. 2. whose leaves should heal the
Nations.

The other is that *Thorne* by *Glastenbury*, The *Thorn*
 growing, as the *Tradition* goes, on *Jo-* by *Glasten-*
seph's Grave. But whether that be true or *bury* called
 no, I know not, it may be; this I am cer- *Joseph's*
 taine, that the whole *Countrey* cries it up *Thorne.*
 for a truth, and a knowne one, that time out
 of mind, even to this day, it hath every year
 blossom'd in full measure upon the 25. day
 of

of our *December*, near that place where *Joseph of Arimathea*, that buried our *Saviour Christ*, first arrived, and first Preached the Gospel in this our *Island*, to witnesse to all posterity, that our *Saviour Christ* did at that day, bud and blossome out of the earth.

That very *Thorn* in a mysterious manner, pricking deep, and reprovng to the quick, the dead unthankfulness of many men, while that poore *Thorne*, as it were, in way of thankfulness to its *Creator*, doth gratefully shoot forth his blossomes upon the very day of his *Birth*; who did honour and grace all *Thornes* so much, as to weare a *Crowne of Thornes* upon the day of his *Death*; and signifying by the white blossomes, that that *King* that was borne that day, and wore the *Thorny Crowne* when hee dyed, is now risen againe, and weares a *Crowne of Glory*; and moreover, by the long liv'dness of the same, intimates to dull mortals, that hee that was that day borne, and died on *Good-Friday*, Crowned in that manner, is still alive, and lives for evermore. And further yet, that those men that are of such a thorny disposition, and touchy froward behaviour, as not

to suffer their souls as this day to send out the white, & pleasant blossomes of thanksgiving, for his Birth, shall at the day of their death, like thorns that are dead, be cast into unquenchable fire. Christ then coming to destroy all such bryars and thornes, as the *Souldiers* of the King of *Assur*, are called, who came to destroy *Jerusalem*, the holy City, Gods Temple, Priests, and Ordinances, and to put an end to the *solemn Feasts*, Isa. 10. 17. to whom for such an intencion the Prophet tells them, *That the light of Israel should be for a fire, and his holy One for flame, and it should burne and devour all such briars and thornes in one day: And shall consume the glory of his Forrest, and his fruitfull field, both Soul and Body, ver. 18.*

What shall I say more? But, that if the things that have beene done in England, had been done among the wild and savage Americans, they had believed in Christ, and honoured this day long ages: But here is the condemnation, that the marvellous light as this day came into the world, and that this day, was the day of its coming; hath been among us of this Island, believed, and yearely is confirmed by Miracles, and yet many blinded ones among us, both
of

of *Clergie and Laity*, shut their eyes and will not see, loving darknesse rather than light.

Pardon me (Or if ye will not, chuse) for I am full of godly jealousie for the honour of my Saviours Birth day, and will affirm, even to my last Breath, that it was upon the twenty fifth day of *December*, and is every yeare to bee kept *Holy*, and that *ἡμέρα Κυριακή* that *Dies Dominica*; that *Ls. day* *κατ' ἐξοχὴν* by way of eminence, from which our *Lords day*, kept every first day of the week, doth take its denomination, and name, rather than from that of the Resurrection, & that it was that *ἡμέρα Κυριακή* that *Lords day* mentioned by *St. John. Revelat. 1. 10.* upon which hee was in the Spirit, upon which *Christ Jesus* did appeare unto him in that glorious shape, which is the opinion of divers and good Divines; and the first *Primitive Fathers* doe also perswade me to believe it, while they in their *VVritings*, as *Zanchie* well observes, doe affirme, that the *Churches of God* did every where, in their time, yearely and solemnely celebrate the *Feast of the Lords Day*, besides the *Feast of the Pasover, Easter, and the Resurrection*, as the chiefe

*Loco super
citato.*

chiefe Feast in the yeare, as a distinct Feast from the same.

This great and principall Feast then, of the Lords Day could bee no other (being by them so precisely distinguished from the day of Christs Resurrection) but the Feast of Christmas, or the day of our Lords Nativity, from which, and not from Easter day, all the Sundayes in the yeare, became to be called Lords dayes, the truth whereof will appear as clear as the Sun, to any that will take the paines to compare Ignatius in his Epistle, ad Magnes, with Justin Martyr, Apol. 2. ad finem, Eusebius lib. 4. cap. 23. Irenaeus l. 4. c. 23. ad Victorem Romanum apud Sozomen: Tertullian lib. de idolat. pag. 376. lib. de Corona Militis, August. Tom. 2. Ep. 119. ad Iannar. de civit. dei lib. 22. c. 20. de verbis Apostoli Ser. 15. Cyrill in Iohan lib. 17. cap. 58. Eusebius lib. 1. cap. 23, 24. Socrates, lib. 5. cap. 22. And to shut up all, take here the words of a most eminent Divine, whose Learning and Piety hath placed him beyond exception, Bishop Andrewes (I meane) in his Sermon upon Iohn, Chap. 8. ver. 56. There is (saith he) no day so properly Christs, as his Birth day, which may appeare, if we set it

It in comparison with other dayes of most honourable note, as the day of his *Passion*, *Resurrection*, and *Ascension*: for the day of his *Passion*, that was not so properly his, because two Thieves suffered with him at the same time, in the same place, after the same manner, *Luke. 23. 32. 33.* Nor the day of his *Resurrection*, for as he rose from the dead, so did others, the same day, and went into the holy City, *Mat. 27. 52. 53.* Nor the day of his *Ascension*, for *Enoch* and *Elias*, had their *Ascension* too, and long before his, *Gen. 5. 24. 2 Kings 2. 11.* But his *Birth-Day* was his without a fellow: None ever so borne, none ever borne *Such*; and therefore (as no *Festivity* is besides it) it is attended as *Christ* himselfe, with an Apostolicall retinue of Holy-dayes.

What we have written may be sufficient to satisfie all gain-sayers, and to make the Sun-dimming clouds of all fantasticall Objections, for to vanish, and to bring in the clear morning of the day; but *Beroaldus*, the Author of the *Scripture Almanack*, with their foolish *Hemmings*, and others their followers, have told their lies so often, that they believe them to be truths, and

the *Sun of righteousness*, that was borne this Day, hath given them over, that they should believe a lye, because they received not the love of this truth, concerning the *Birth-Day* of the Son of God, so that *counting themselves wise, they are become fools.*

That worthy, learned, laborious, judicious Gentleman, *Edward Fisher*, hath lately, sufficiently brayed them and their foolish objections, in a mortar; yet I doubt they will never be the wiser. Their objections are so ridiculous, self-confuting, idle, vaine, erroneous, that I would not defile my paper with them, but that *Solomon* bids me, *Answer a foole in his folly, lest he seem wise in his owne conceit.*

Christian
Caveat

These *Jesuites*, *ex ignorantia*, crie out as *Campian* the *Jesuite* did, *Scriptura, Patres, Concilia, Rationes, &c.* *Scriptures, Fathers, Councells, Reasons, &c.* All are on our side, they are indeed, but as rods for the backs of fools.

For *Scripture*, *Christ* (say they) was born when *Augustus* made the whole world to be Taxed, and all went to be Taxed, every one to his owne City, *Luke. 2. 1. 3.* which could not be in the winter, because

because it is not to be believed that wise Emperour would command poore men to come in winter to their own Townes:

2. The Shepheards were then in the fields, watching over their flocks, v. 8. and the winter was no fitting time for it: A Sheepish Argument, fitter for a Shepheards boy, than a Shepheard of *Israel*. *Christ (Man) was not borne in England, but in Judea, and there were Wolves there, and therefore the Shepheards were to watch their flocks at all times; or become like many of our English, who when the Wolfe comes, flie away.*

But 3. *Christ* (say they) according as our affirmation, was borne and baptized about the same time, it could not then be in mid-winter, it being nor wholesome for men to goe up then to the head in water.

To kill these three Birds with one bolt. The Land of *Canaan* is found to extend it selfe for latitude from the 36. degree and 52. minutes, to the 33. and 44. minutes, and for longitude, it is placed betweene 64. degree, and 22. minutes. and the 69. degree and ten minutes, so that it is included fully and wholly in the third Climat,

in

in which *Fez* and *Morocco* are situated; where the winter season (as every Geographer, and Marriner will tell us) is hotter than our *May* here in *England*; and yet *Canaan* in heat exceeds *Fez* and *Morocco*, lying about 40. degrees nearer the East than they doe.

The Scripture saith as much, *Levit.* 23. 6. 10. 11. For in regard that a sheaf of the first fruits of Harvest, was yearely offered on the second day after the Passover, which was the 16. day of *Abib*, and is with us the 27. of *March* (which 27. according to the true account falls upon the 15. of our *March*) it must necessarily follow, that the temperature of the month *December* in the Land of *Canaan*, is answerable to our *May*, if not *June*; the season then of the year could no way hinder, either the execution of *Cesar's* Decree, or the Shepheards being in the Fields, nor our Saviour's going into the River *Jordan*, in *December*. What they urge out of the text of *Luke*, concerning the conception of *Mary*, that it should be in the beginning of *July*, because the Course of *Abiath*, *Zacharie's* Course, the eighth Course of the Priests, is in the end of *June*, and that Course la-

sted a fortnight, is not onely disclaimed by *Berealdus*, their Patron, who not fitting to be a *Chronologer*, lib. 4. cap. 2. confesseth, *We doe neither understand when the Course of Zacharias was, nor how long it lasted; But* proves them to be *naturall brut Beasts* that cannot number; we desire no better Argument than this *Computation* to prove the very day, for let them compute from the third day of the moneth *Adar*, and the sixth year of *Darius*, *Ezra* 6. 15. When the *Priests* were set in their divisions, and their courses began, being in all twenty foure, and every Course continuing one whole week till the yeare of the world, wherein *John* was conceived, and they shall finde that *Zacharies* course fell in *September*, and then that by their own Argument, *John's* Conception must bee in that moneth: then is the sixth moneth after *Christs*, *Luke* 1. 26 &c. which is *March*; then let them go to any *Teanning Sister*, and she will assure them that *Christ* (according to the *Scripture*, and the common course of *Women*) must be borne in *December*.

As for their *Fathers* they urge, they will not help them;

Clemens of Alexandria, saith that in his days

dayes there was a question about the certainty of Christ Birth: Men in these dayes question both his *God-head*, and *Man-hood*, *Strom.* l. i. *Quid ergo?* Is he therefore neither God nor Man?

But *Cyrill* saith, that the Church of *Alexandria*, celebrated at first, the Birth-day of *John the Baptist*, on the twenty third day of *April*, in his Homilies, or twelve Books on *John*, and therefore Christ must be born in *October*.

Like Father, like Sons, both Bastards, these works of the Father accounted so, both by *Papists*, and *Protestants*, it being certain, that *Jodocus Cliflovens* wrote foure Books of the twelve, and the rest are accounted *Spurious*, both by *Mr. Perkins*, *propter ad demonst: problem:* and by *Bellarmin*, *Catalog. Eccl. Scriptorum ad an. 430*. Neither is it likely to bee true, that the Church of *Alexandria* should at the first celebrate the Birth-day of *John the Baptist* in *April*, seeing the *Egyptian Churches* (of which that of *Alexandria* was the chiefe) did ever maintaine that Christ was borne on the 25. day of *Decemb.* and yearely kept that day Festival in memory thereof, as *Genebrard* hath shewed out of their owne *Accounts*,

and *Kalenders*, and not onely they, but the *Greek Churches*, and so did the *Arabian, Persian, Syriak Churches*, as learned Mr. *Gregory* hath fully proved, in his *Notes and Observations*, Chap. 34.

But grant, the words of the forged *Cyril* were true, and that they kept *John's Birthday*, April 23. it seemes they fell from the *Observation*, and found themselves in an error, and judged the *Greek and Latin Churches* to bee in the right, who kept it annually and constantly on the twenty fourth of June, as *Cansabon* confesseth. || *dd.* I would they would leave their Errours likewise.

May be they would, but that *Epiphanius* (say they) saith, that *Christ* was borne the fifth of *January*; take heede, that was in Winter and one of the twelve dayes, I doubt you will turne *small-Fasts*, but let me tell you, as for *lyars*, we had rather have their roomes than their company; and you belie your Father, for *Epiphanius*, who (if he were alive, would put you in the Catalogue of his *Hereticks*) doth indeed twice affirm that *Christ* was borne in the 33. year of the first *Herod*, the Son of *Antipater*, which was the forty second year of *Augustus Caesar*,

far, as you may read, *lib. 2. cont. heres. har. 30. lib. 3. har. 78.* But not a word, either of the moneth, nor day of the moneth.

Will you yeild yet? No: for our Coun-
try-man Bede tells us, that for certain the
Indictions began on the 24. of *Septemb.* and
 that our Lord was born (*Indictione quarta*
insunte) when the fourth *Indiction* began,
 therefore Christ was borne on the 24. of
Septemb. Help Neighbours! Born in *Octob.*
 saith *Cyrl*, in *January*, saith *Epiphanius*, and
 now in *Septemb.* saith *Bede*, and all lies;
 for the two former said no such matter, nei-
 ther the last, for our Countrey-man doth
 not say that Christ was borne when the
 fourth *Indiction* began, but in the fourth,
 and an *Indiction*, according to *Bucholzerus*,
 being the space of 15. yeares, Christ might
 very well be borne in the beginning of the
Indiction, though he was born three mo-
 neths after the first day thereof.

*De ratione
 temporis
 cap. 46.*

Well poor *Babes*, your Fathers forsake
 you, will your Reasons take you up? I
 doubt they are too weake to heave such
 blocks from the ground; but let's try their
 strength,

1. *Taxes and Collections of Tribute* began *Ratio 1.*
 on the twenty fourth day of *Septemb.* as

H 3

appears

appeares by the *Indictions* which were instituted to beare account of the payment of Tribute by *Constantine the Great*, Anno Dom. 312. Therefore *Augustus* his Decree, that all the World should bee taxed, went out on the 24. of *September*, and so *Christ* was borne on that day. *Hysteron Proteron*, brains and Rairs.

Ratio 2.^a =

But 2. The Church of *England* doth not celebrate the true day of *Christs Birth*, nor the Churches beyond Sea, because the *Gregorian account* erres almost two dayes, and the *Julian* more than twelve, therefore the Church of *England* erres.

Isag. Chron.
c. 8.

No such matter; for though we doe not celebrate the very day exactly and precisely, nor taken, yet we celebrate the true day according to the *Julian account*, which account is yet generally embraced by the *Protestants*, and not to be despised saith *Calvisius*; well we suppose it be not the very day, I hope you will maintaine that the day of *Christs Resurrection*, or *Easter day*, is yearly to be kept exactly. I pray you tell me, how often it fall ever in the same moneth, or on the same day? Suppose the day were not certainly known, yet the Church hath power to ordaine one annually to be kept in remembrance of the fact.

great mercy, and that of her selfe, by her own
 father, it being not so much the day, as
 the benefit, we remember. *Tolle & lege,*
2 Chron. 30. 23. And consider that free-
 will seven dayes Feast, kept after the Pas-
 sever.

Again, in case we know the day strict-
 ly, yet it is not absolutely necessary for us
 to keepe it on that day alwayes, if the
 Church appoint, or thinke the contrary ;
 for the *Jewes* did not keep their *Purim* on
 the same day of the yeare whereon their
 deliverance was given them, but on the
 next day after, as you may read in *Esther* ;
 the *Passover* was to bee eaten in the first
 moneth, *Exod. 12. 2, 3.* yet *Hezekiah* and
 his people kept it in the second moneth,
 contrary to the institution in that particu-
 lar, *2 Chron. 30. 2, 3.* and yet they were
 accepted, as you may read, ver. 20.

Yes, but 3. *I. H.* tells us, in his *Scripture Objection 3*
Almanack, that the *Saturnalia*, those mad
 feasts to *Saturnus*, the Father of the Gods,
 were kept at the same time by the *Heathen*,
 that the *Christians* keep their *Christmas*,
 and that you have your *Karrils* from *Ceres*,
 the Goddesse of Corne, in which Feasts at
 the same time, a sheaf was offered to her ;

and that you have your word *Tule*, or *Ule*, from Ule or Ule an *Hymne* then offered in her praise.

Sirs, give over for shame, all these are as false as the *Almanack*, for our word *Tule* is from the Norman word *Nule*, or *Ule*, which signifies new, the sheaf was not offered to *Ceres* in *December*, nor the *Hymne* in her praise, but at her own Feast, which was in *Aprill*, as *Ovid* avers, *Fastor lib. 4*. Nor did the *Saturnalia*, which lasted for three dayes, begin on the 25. of *Decem- ber*, but on the seventh, as *Macrobius* doth witnesse; but suppose the contrary; May not *Christians* set a day apart to Gods service, in that moneth that *Heathens* made *Feasts* to their *Idols*? If so, wee must bid adieu to all publick services, and serve your humours, and conclude, that the *Jewes* did very ill to keep their *Feast* of *Tabernacles*, according to Gods command, in the moneth of *Septemb*. seeing the *Heathens* kept their *Bacchanalia*, after the same manner, at the same time. So *Plutarch*.

Saturn, l. 1
c. 10,

Symposiack

But lastly, your Feasting doth offend us: Your *Plum Pottage*, and *Minc'd Pies*, doe offend our tast and smell; your *Bayes* and *Rosemary*, *Hollie* and *Ivis*. Boxes and
Privet,

Privet, with all your green *Strawings*, and trimming your Churches, and Houses, doe offend our pure eyes, and your *Carrolls* and *Songs* doe offend our sanctified eares.

Alas Brethren, we cannot help it, we must not offend God, in striving not to offend you; it is not we that give, but you that take; and we may not neglect our duty, to please your humours.

Wee keep the day *Festivally*, we ought to doe it, as we have shewne already, we have warrant for it, *Esther* 9. 22. from the *Jews* practise; who for a lesse blessing kept the 14, and 15. of *Adar* yearly as the dayes wherein the *Jews* rested, and the month which was turned unto them, from sorrow to joy, and from mourning to a good day; that they should make them dayes of feasting and joy, and of sending portions one to another, and of gifts to the poore. And likewise from the command of *Nehemiah*, and *Ezra*, in the like case; This day is holy unto the Lord our God, mourne not, nor weepe; goe your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepar'd: for this day is holy unto our Lord: neither be ye sorry, for the joy of the Lord is your strength. Tell

Nehemi
8. 9, 10.

me

me, did ever the Church of England celebrate this day, in any other manner than the *Jewes* were commanded to doe those? Did you ever know any *Tule-games* suffered thereupon? Was it not as religiously and devoutly kept, by hearing the Word, receiving the Sacrament, offering up the Sacrifice of thanksgiving for Christs coming into the world, and relieving his poor Members, as ever you did any nicknamed Sabbath-day in the yeare? Nay, I will affirme that you never heard any Harp or Violl in our Feasts upon that day (as the *Jewes* had) but our chiefe worke was to remember, as wee ought, the work of the Lord thereupon, and the operation of his hands, that as this day the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw his glory, as the glory of the onely begotten Son of God, upon the morning of this day, breaking out in darknesse, he making the day his own, by being born thereupon, we will therefore be glad, and rejoyce in it.

As for our Plum-Pottage, and Minc'd-Pies, stand off, and doe not let them trouble you, we dare eat, making no question for conscience sake, because our stomacks are strengthened by that forecited piece of invitation, *Nehem. 8. 10. Eat the fat,*

Isa. 5. 12.

John 1.

Plal. 118.
24.

Plum-
Pottage,
& Minc'd
Pies.

eat, and drinke the sweets. And Brethren, though you will not put your Spooones into our Platter, yet give me leave to reach a Spoonfull of instruction to your soules, from our Pie and Pottage, that you would endeavour to joyne with us in the maine of our Feasting, which is, to tast and see how sweet our Lord Iesus is. Doe not you cry out prophane now, if you doe, St. Paul will stop your mouth, who makes the same use of, and raiseth the like instruction from, the unleavened Bread that the Jewes used in the Passeeover; 1 Cor. 5. 7, 8. Purge out therefore the old leaven, that you may bee a new lump, as you are unleavened, for even Christ our Passeeover is crucified for us: Therefore let us keep the Feast, not with old leaven, nor the leaven of malice and wickednesse, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. Behold two table doctrines, one of Easter, the other of Christmas, both raised from the Viands.

As for our Baies and Rosemary, and other green trimmings of our Churches and Houses, truly Brethren, we doe, and may doe it, by the same warrant that the Israelites in the Feast of Tabernacles, Nehem. 8. 16. did goe out to the Mountaine, and fetch

Baies, and
Rosemary.

fetcht Olive, Myrtle, and Palme branches, to adorne their Booths withall, they are as significant as these; their Booths so trimmed up with those Branches, and built in the streetes, according to Gods command, signified, and put them in minde, that they were Pilgrims in the Wildernesse, and that their Fathers dwelt in Tabernacles: So as our meat which is more choice than at other times, puts us in mind on that day of Christs sinlesse humanity, and our strong drinke of his Spirituall consolation: So our Churches and Houses decked with Baies and Rosomary, Hollie and Ivie, and other Plants, which are alwayes green, Winter and Summer, signifie, and put us minde of his Deity, that the Childe that now was borne, was God and Man, should spring up like a tender Plant, should alwayes bee greene and flourishing, and live for evermore. Therefore thus the Sponse entertains her Beloved, whose Bed is alwayes greene, Cant. 1, 16, and shewes Iesus Christ to bee yesterday, and to day, and the same for ever.

As for our Songs and Carrolls, Brethren, they are collected and composed out of the Scriptures, contain matter of instruction, and edification, they implant the history and bene-
fits

Objections Answered.

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of Christs Birth, in the mindes of poor ignorant people; and oftentimes he is taken by a Song, that will flye a Sermon. Such Songs are like the Songs of Moses, which learned by heart, put the people in minde of what God hath done for them, as upon that day. and such are most fitting for the time, and we have an order for them, under St. Pauls owne hand, Col. 3. 16. *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, in all wisdome, teaching and admonishing one another, in Psalms, and Hymns, and Spiritual Songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. Brethren, remember what the King said to those men who were bid to the Marriage of his Son, and would not come, but went about their Husbandry, and other occasions. Not one of these shall taste of my Supper, &c. The Day of Christs Birth, was the day of the Marriage of the Son of God, when the two natures formerly hand-fasted in the Conception, were now declared for ever Married, never to be severed, that Marriage-day is annually to be kept by us in remembrance. I invite you all against the next yeare, if you will not come, I cannot force you, I leave you to the comming of the Bridegrooms, and then*

then you shall know whether you shall
tast of his Supper.

Conclu-
sion.

I will say no more, but that notwith-
standing all your pettish oppositions, this
truth shall stand stedfast, That

The 25. day of *Decemb.* ought annually
to be kept holy as a *Festivall*, and *Thanks-
giving day*, by all Christians; let the Lear-
ned *Zanchie* speak the *Epilogue*.

*Sic docent Sacra litera; Sic Patres: Sic
nostri seculi pii doctores: Sic vetus Consuetu-
do, atq; Usus in omnibus, & omnium locorum,
& Gentium ecclesiis receptus, & approbatus
confirmat (Addo) Sic deniq; Miracula.*

So much the *Scriptures* teach, so much
the *Fathers*, so much the holy *Doctours* of
our dayes; In a word, *The ancient use and
custome*, received and approved in all the
particular Churches of all places and *Nations*,
doe approve and maintain so much as hath
beene spoken, and (let me adde) so much
the forementioned *Miracles*.

Now be that is unjust, let him be unjust
still; and he that is filthy, let him be filthy still;
he that is ignorant, let him be ignorant still.

But

But he that is holy, let him be holy still.

*Behold he comes quickly, and his reward is
with him, to give every man according to his
work, to both them that doe, and doe not.*

Opus Diei in Die suo.

*Till then, grace and peace bee to all them
that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity,
and the day of his appearing.*

Amen, HALLELUJAH.

THE BLESSED
BIRTH-DAY
Celebrated in some Sancti-
fied meditations on the An-
gels Anthem,

Luke 2. 14.

*Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace,
good will towards men.*

Why should not we with joy resound & sing
The blessed Natals of our heavenly King
Why should not we with mirth salute the morn
Of his birth-day by whom we are new-born?
See how each creature in his kinde rejoices,
And shall not we lift up melodious voices?
Hark how the Angels sing, shall we be sad?
The greatest good is ours, be we most glad.
Hark how the Star enameld heavens rebound
With echo's of Angelick Anthems sound!
It is for us that they those joyes expresse,
And shall not we shew forth some thankfulnesse?

The blessed birth-day.

Joyn we in consort these sweet Quires among,
In sundry voices, sing we all one long,
Glory to God on high, on earth be peace,
And let good will towards Christians never cease

Lacivious songs, vain Carols now avaunt ;
And whatsoever prophane throates use to chaunt,
Which through the ear pours poison to the heart,
A better subject doth this day impart,
To sacred songs is Sions Muse inclinde,
Some holy matter fits a holy minde.
Sing we high mysteries in an humble strain,
And lofty matters in a lowly vein,
The sacred subject which we sing, affords
Strong lines, but strong in matter, not in words,
For things so high they cannot be exprest
By any words, the plainest are the best.
He who was born so humble, doth refuse
To have his birth sung by a swelling Muse.
Ill doth a flanting phrase devotion fit ;
We sing to shew our zeal, and not our wit.
Let Gentiles strive to be prophanely wittie,
This holy Day calls for an holy ditty.
Then let our dittie answer to the day,
And with heavens Quiristers let's sing and say
Glory to God on high in earth be peace,
And let good will towards Chr;stians never cease.

The

The *a* womans seed in Eden promised,
 Is come to crush the curst Serpents head,
 Whose coming all the Prophets have foretold,
 The complement of prophecies of old,
 The truth of that the types did represent,
 The fulnesse of the figures true intent.
 The *b* substance which the ceremonies veilde,
 The morning star that seem'd to be conceal'd,
 Old Jacobs Shilo, and the glorious flower
 Of Jesses rod, the rod that did devoure
 The Magick rod turn'd Serpent, even he
 Whose day old Abraham desir'd to see,
 The salving Serpent for their cure prest,
 VVho by the infernal Serpent were infected:
 All these are come to be by us possesst,
 One who all generations maketh blest.
 VVhat others did expect, we do enjoy,
 To us that child is born, that blessed boy.
 To us is given that promis'd was to them;
 The joy and glory of Jerusalem.
 Shall we not then with holy Angels sing,
 An holy Anthem to our heavenly King?

*Glory to God on high, on earth be peace,
 And let good will towards Christians never cease.*

^a Gen. 3.15. Iohn 3.14. ^b Rev. 22.16. Gen. 49.10. Isa. 11.10.
 Rom. 15.12. Job. 8.96. The tribe of Judahs lyon that prevails to
 unclasp the book, and loose the seven shut seals. Rev. 5. v. 5.
 Isa. 9.6. Numb. 21.9.

Glory to God on high, who this hath wrought,
 And maps^a ²salvation thus about hath brought,
 By wondrous ways, which none could do but one
 Who wondrous is in all his wayes alone.

Well might his name be called^b wonderfull
 Whose Birth, life, death, whose risings were so full,
 Of glorious^c wonders, and of wondrous glories,
 Such as the world ne're found in other stories.

O with what wonders do high heav'ns abound,
 Sith sundry wonders in each worm are found?
 Wondrous in all his works and Saints is he,
 Shall he not in himself more wondrous be?

Who in his Baptists birth was wondrous known,
 Shall he not be more wondrous in his own?

O sacred Riddles, which no ingeny,
 Or art of man, or angels can unty!

Which whosoe'r would have to be disclos'd
 Must with his heifer plough who them compos'd.

And being once disclos'd who can refrain
 His tongue from tuning this Angelike strain,

Glory to God on high, on earth be peace,

And let good will towards Christians never cease.

Behold a son, as ancient as his father,
 Being without beginning both together,

'Twixt whom and him, this difference is alone,
 That he the Father is, and this the sonne.

^a Plal. 72. 18. 77. 14. ^b Ilia. 9. 6. ^c Plal. 6. 2. *Mirabilis Deus in sanctis suis.* Plal. 6. 8. *Si in sanctis suis mirabilis Deus, quomodo non in seipso mirabilis, Maximus Favorinus in Bat. Dom.*
 The

The one begets, the other is begot,
 Yet th' one in time from th' other differs not;
 For both a coeternall being had,
 Er time or any creature else was made,
 So of himself the Golden eye of heav'n
 A beam begets, which with himself is ev'n,
 In time, in being, for the beam begun
 In the same instant with his Sire the Son:
 So from the Spring, a springing stream doth flow,
 Which in it is, and yet doth from it go,
 So yields the incense a sweet smell, and this
 Both of and with and in the incense is,
 So doth the pregnant mind a word beget,
 'Twixt whom and it, time doth no distance set,
 The Sun, the spring, th' incense the mind afford
 At once the beam, the stream, the smell, the word.
 Cannot the father do that in the son,
 Which in the creature we see daily done?
 But this eternall sonship seorns compare,
 Who can his generation declare?
 Before thou canst thy makers offspring show,
 Presumptuous man first learn thine own to know
 Peace (damned^b hereticks) blaspheme no more,
 Say not the father was in time before
 The son, for here is no priority
 In time, in Deity, in Dignity:

^a 16. 53. 6. ^b Arrive, who said there was a time when the Son

Indeed the persons we do different name,
 The substance, essence honour, is the same.
 No^a time before the father ever was,
 No time before the son did ever pass.
 What threed of time before him could be spinning,
 Who is the word who is in time beginning?
 That word which ever was with God, that word
 Which ever was, is shall be God the Lord,
 What time could be before him who did frame
 Both time and all that man can creature name?
 Same God, same Essence, same Eternitie,
 And all the same, save personalitie.
 The^b son we say, and do not say amisse,
 The same not who, but what the father is,
 Considering such a wondrous glorious birth,
 Shall we not sing and say with heavenly mirth,
Glory to God on high, on earth be peace,
And let good will towards Christians never cease,
 Behold a son, who father hath and mother,
 Yet may be said to have nor one nor other:
 In heaven a father, but no mother known
 A mother here he had, but father none:
 Had any *Adams* son his father been,
 He had receiv'd with *Adams* seed his sin.
 And had he ought of *Adams* seed possessed,
 Then how can *Adams* seed in him be blessed?

^a John 1.1. In the beginning was the word, and the word was
 with God, and the word was God; all things were made by him.
non quia qui summus pater est, & filius hic est, sed quia qui
summus pater est, & filius hoc est,

a Th' high Priest by whom we should be reconcil'd,
 Must holy harmlesse be, and undefil'd, (puted)
 b Sep'rate from sinners, (though 'mongst them re-
 For had he been with sin himself polluted,
 How could he from us our pollution take?
 He must be pure, who others pure shall make.
 c Who can the worlds sin take away but he,
 Who from all spot and blot of sin is free?
 The beam out of mine eye he plucks alone,
 Who hath nor beam, nor blemish in his own,
 v Let all the world shew such a son again,
 Whose birth so many wonders doth contain,
 d A Lamb new slain, slain e'r the world begun,
 His mothers father, and his daughters son,
 A Dove hatch'd in the nest himself did build,
 A flower in Winter sprung that fram'd the field
 From whence it sprung, a Lilly risen new,
 Which made the bed and garden where it grew.
 Let all the world but shew me such a child
 Of Adams seed, not with his sin defil'd.
 e A child that's God, and God mighty to save
 All those who unto him his father gave.
 A child, who had he not to us been borne,
 All generations had been quite forlorne.
 A field that nere by man was ploughd nor till'd;
 Wheat, whence is made the bred that life do's yield

a 1 Heb. 7. 26. b Isa. 53. 12. c Quis enim peccata mundi
 tollis, nisi is in quem peccatum non cadit. d 1 Rev. 13. 8. e Isa.
 53. 4.

The blessed birth-day.

Let all the world but shew me such a mother,
And say which is more wondrous one or other,
She for a mother, or he for a son,
It must be said, when all is said and done,
O wondrous mother, but more wondrous son.
For such a saving son both mother may
With Angels sing, and we with them may say,
 Glory to God on high, on earth be peace,
 And let good will towards Christians never cease.
Behold a mother, yet a Virgin still,
Whose womb not ^a lust, but lively faith did fill,
Before and in, and after birth a maid,
Of whom 'mong all her sex it may be said,
Sh' enjoy'd by bringing forth this heav'nly boy,
A Virgins honour with a mothers joy :
For such a mother never was before,
And such another never shall be more,
Astronomers of the Zodiack cease to talk, (walk
Of the twelve Signes through which the sun doth
Say what you will, you cannot well avow,
The Sun in *Virgo* truly was till now,
You never saw that light which shines so far,
Veil'd in a Stall, revealed by a Star,
You never knew what now we see is done,
Heav'n joyn'd with earth, a sublunary sun.

a Mariam non libido impregnavit, sed fides, gaudia matris habens cum virginitatis honore, Bern. Nec primam similem visa est, nec habere secundam id in Vigil. Nat. scr.

The blessed Trinity.

Above all your stars adore this rising sun,
And if the spheres make musick as they run,
Be sure no better close than this can be
The sweet La buri then to their melodie.

Glory to God on high, on earth be peace,

And let good will towards Christians never cease.

Behold the Lamb of God, the Lamb and God,
Which maketh those things ev'n wch erst were odd
Three Substances, two Natures, Persons one,
The sacred Godheads chief expression.

As in the ever blessed Trinity,

One holy nature is in persons three :

So in the son (who flesh for us did take)

Two natures, Gods and ours one person make ;

Three persons there one substance do possesse,

One person here injoyes three substances.

O blessed bond, O sacred union

That joyneth a three in two, and two in one.

Three substances in natures, two agree,

These two in one, this one, one, two and three,

By vertue of an union personall,

Though not of persons neither naturall.

Although of natures, but substantiall,

Because of substances united so,

That neither their own properties forgo,

*Unio personalis, sed non personarum, unio naturarum, sed
non naturalis, quia supernaturalis.*

Yea,

Yea, such a friendly interchange they make,
 That each with other doth in speech partake,
 And what is said of God the same of man,
 Sith God and man are one) affirm we can,
 And what of man said properly may be,
 The same likewise of God affirm may we,
 Thus do we say, and what we say is true,
 That God did dye and man did death subdue,
 God dy'd because the person who did dye,
 Was not meere man, but God eternally,
 And man subdued death, because the same
 Christ God and man both dy'd and overcame,
 These speeches in the abstract disagree,
 In sense compounded well accorded be,
 Lord what is man, that onely for his sake,
 Th' almighty should such strange exchanges make,
 What higher is than God, than earth more base,
 Yet so far God vouchsafeth earth to grace,
 So humbly God doth unto earth descend,
 So highly God doth cause earth to extend,
 So nearly God earth to himself uniteth,
 So firm a league 'twixt him and it he plighteth,
 That what God doth, that earth is said to do,
 And what earth suffers, God doth suffer too.
 Man know thou art but earth, pride therefore hate,
 Man thou art joyn'd to God, be not ingrate,

* *Communicatio idiomatum.* * *Videatur Bernard in vigil.*
Nativit. ser. 3.

But

But sing to him by whom advanc'd thou art,
With lofty voyce, but with an humble heart.
Glory to God on high, on earth be peace,
And let good will towards Christians never cease.
Lord what is man, that onely for his sake
Th' almighty should such strange exchanges make
Eternity an Infant is become,
The strength of Israel's weak, the word is dumb,
He, whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain,
In narrow bowels doth impent remain,
Born is he in a base unworthy stall,
Who us advanceth to heavens highest hall,
He, who doth silly man like angels make,
An homely lodging with poore beasts doth take,
He, who doth all things fit, fits now a cratch.
Heaven unto earth, God unto man doth match.
Th' immortall putteth on mortality,
The everlasting life begins to dy;
That by his death he may that Debt defray,
Which man did ow, but none save God could pay
The soules Phyfician is to death given over,
That so the sin-sick patient might recover,
A desp'rate cure for desp'rate maladie,
The head must off, or the whole body dye.
Who is mans head but God? but oh how can
God dye, he may if he become a man,
God is become a man subject to death,
A subject which the Conquerour conquereth.

Because

Because the children were of^a flesh compos'd,
 The father would be in that flesh inclin'd,
 That so by death he might o'rcome that evill,
 Which had the power of death, that is the Devill.
 God is become a man, the strangest news,
 That ever was or shall be, yet ensues
 No^b alteration, neither diminution,
 No losse nor mixture here, much lesse confusion,
 Becoming what he was not, ^c he remains
 That which he ever was, the manhood gains,
 The Godhead loseth, not to me he gives
 Himself, and yet his own, he ever lives.
 Two sundry wayes indeed, a son is he,
 Yet may he not be said two sons to be,
 One way the son of God, son of his mother
 Another way, both wayes one, not another,

^a Heb. 2. 14. Christ called the everlasting father, Isa 9. 6.
^b Verbum quippe caros factum, non desinit esse quod fuerat ver-
 bum, carnis dum g'ntinat usum, Prudentius in penehomach.
^c Ille manet quod semper erat, quod non erat, esse incipit, nec
 muti contulit, & sibi mansit, nec Deus est noster imminuit sua.
 Prudentius toir, Supra sic homo, sic Deus est, ut non sis alter
 alter, Pros. de provid. non alter ex patre, alter ex matre, sed al-
 ter ex patre, aliter ex matre, Eucherius Rom. 2. de Nat.
 Venit in mundum, non deposita sed seposita maiestate
 assumpta est humanitas, non consumpta divinitas, id ibid.
 Huic illud sacrum enigma, sum quod eram, nec eram quod
 sum, nunc dico utraque, invocas nisi me, parte ab utraque
 tines.

his glory not call off, but laid aside,
To earth he comes, yet doth in heaven abide,
As mine arm extendeth, doth abide,
With joynts and sinews to my shoulder ty'd
To reacht the Lord his arm to me in love,
Yet from himself he did it not remove.
Thus greatnesse little to become was pleased,
Yet to continue great he never ceas'd,
Had he not dain'd himself to humble thus,
What good had all his greatnesse done to us? (lie
Thus heavens high King swath'd in a cratch doth
Yet loseth nothing of his Majesty,
Great cause have we, t' embrace humility,
Sith God himself embraced us thereby.
When greatnesse vengeance for our sins did crave,
Humility it was that did us save,
When Majesty and Justice 'gainst us flood,
Then mercy through humility wrought our good,
Learn of thy Lord, proud man humble to be,
Who read this humble Lecture unto thee,
When being God, he stooped to be man,
Whence greater glory at the last he wan,
When as his Father did him so advance,
And so his name above all names enhance,
That at the name of Jesus every knee,
In heaven, in earth, in hell should bended be,

What can man lose by his humility,
 When God himself advanced was thereby?
 a That meeknes which at first his birth did preach,
 His words, his deeds, throughout his life did teach,
 Learn ye of me (saith he) for I am meek,
 What better thing than Learning can we seek?
 Than Christ what better teacher can there be?
 What better lesson than humility,
 Who will not, (that can good from ill discern)
 Of the best master, the best lesson learn.
 By the same paces we to him must tend,
 By which his son did unto us descend.
 Behold thy King comes meek to thee, wilt thou,
 Come proud unto thy King, will he allow
 In thee (who art with brittle clay invested)
 What in his glorious angels he detested?
 Pride them from heaven and glory did eject,
 Humility to heaven must us erect,
 In Gods esteem much rather is allow'd,
 An humble sinner, than a just man proud:
 Is not God high? yet he who will attain
 Unto his highnesse lowly must remain,
 Erect thy self, he doth from thee retire,
 Deject thy self, thou dost to him aspire,
 For when he sees thy stooping to deject thee,
 Himself stoops down more highly to erect thee,

a Marth. II. 29. 21. 5. *Melior est peccator humilis, quam iustus superbus, id. serm. 49. de rom.*

The proud afar off he beholds to scorn them,
The humble he regards with grace t' adorn them.
What grieves the blessed sp'rits who seek our bliss
What more doth glad the fiends our foes than this
To see a lowly God a lofty man,
An humble Christ, and a proud Christian?
Thus God is one become a man with thee,
That thou again at one with God might be,
We could not come to him, to us he came,
Taking our nature, and with us the same,
Save onely sin which he came to abolish,
And that partition-wall for to demolish,
Which severed us from God, now joyn we may,
Man unto God, by man hath found a way.
The Patient could not to th' Physician go,
The kind Physician comes to him, and so
Unto himself, he our disease derives,
That from himself and us both, he it drives.

Lord what is man, that onely for his sake,
Th' almighty should such strange exchanges make,
Th' Angels themselves his love considering,
In joyfull admiration do sing,

*Glory to God on high, on earth be peace,
And let good will towards Christians never cease.*

Once God of *Adam* in decision said,
Behold the man like one of us is made.

The son of *Adam* now of God may say,
 Behold God's made like one of us to day;
 Not onely like to us, but even the same,
 All that belongs to this our mortall frame.
 He took, save that which made it mortall sin,
 Were't not for which, man had immortall been,
 Yea sin it self he took (as truth doth say)

But took it onely, to take it away.

Similitude of sinfull flesh arrayes,

His Godhead, so sin in the flesh he slayes,

Similitude of sinfull flesh he takes,

But yet in taking it this difference makes,

The flesh he takes in truth, with flesh indu'd,

The sin he takes but in similitude.

• The flesh he takes for ever to enjoy it,

The sin he takes but onely to destroy it,

He knew no sin, yet sin was made, that we

The righteousnesse of God in him might be.

The royallest exchange for him was this,

When God chang'd his for ours, we ours for his.

Lord what is man, that onely for his sake,

Th'almighty should such strange exchanges make:

Cease we not then with blessed sprites to sing

An holy Antheme to our heavenly King.

Glory to God on high, on earth be peace,

And let good will towards Christians never cease.

Proud carnall man, strike thou the swelling sails

Of humane wisdom, which here nought avails.

Under

Under the Lce of true Religion fall,
 In this adventure, faith is all in all!
 Great is this mystery of godlinesse,
 Transcending dwarf-wit, who can it expresse?
 Who can conceive, how earth should heaven invest
 How God in flesh should be made manifest,
 How Justice should in sweet conjunction,
 With mercy meet in the same action:
 How the same person God and man should be,
 Yet neither nature lose their property.
 How the same son should father have and mother,
 And yet be said to have nor one nor other:
 How the same woman truly may be said,
 At once to be a mother and a maid,
 How mothers milk into her breasts should come,
 Who ne'r receiv'd mans milk into her womb,
 How God from heav'n should come to joyn with
 Yet God wth God in heav'n should ever stay, (clay:
 The Heathen wizards, though they did avow
 Men to be Gods, yet never would allow
 God to be man, affirming God would scorn,
 In a poore mortall vessel to be born,
 Yea they who best judg'd of the Deity,
 Would soonst of all deride this mystery,

1. Tim. 3. 16. Hoc mysterium miraculi plenum est ut sanctus rī-
 Bernard. unum idemque genus misericordia & justitia, una
 idemque persona Deus & homo, una eademque summa, uirgo
 mater, unus idemque filius.

That he who immortality possesses,
 Should become mortall, he who other blesses,
 And is most blest himself, should be a curse,
 (For who would change a good estate for worie)
 That he who thunders in the clouds on high,
 Becomes an Infant, in a cratch should lye,
 And this not for his friends , but even for those,
 Who of his friends, became his mortall foes,
 That so they might for ever friends remain ,
 Though by their friendship he can never gain
 The least of that it cost him to procure it,
 And on such frail ones firmly to ensure it,
 Yet all this wretched man to bring,
 He hath perform'd: Then care we not to sing
Glory to God on high, on earth be peace,
And let Good-will towards Christians never cease
 Come faith and fathome the profundities
 Of these so secret sacred mysteries,
 The life of reason, is too short to sound
 The sea which neither bottom hath nor bound,
 All ^a Learning here is pos'd, all wit to seek,
 Doctors and Dunces here are learn'd alike,
 The wisest here no wiser are than fools,
 Christ in a ^b stall was born not in the Schools,

^a *Hic humana cessat ratio, hic stacessit acies intellectus nostri, hic indocti pariter doctique conjunguntur. Aegius hom. in Theophan.* ^b *Christus non in Academia natus est, sed in stabulo, id. ibid.*

This birth by th' Angel was not first made knowⁿ
 To Scribes and Rabbies, but to Shepherds shown,
 People who in simplicity did live,
 Dispute they could not, but they could believe,
 Unto the feast, which was for all men fited,
 The wise men were the last who were admitted,
 Avaunt then saucy curiosity,
 Dangerous it is into the Ark to pry.
 Here nothing can sound knowledg more advance
 * Nothing more learn'd than humble ignorance.
 Grant we that God can nothing do which man
 Can never reach by reasons narrow span.
 Gods works apparent are to us, the way
 Whereby he works, clos'd in himself doth stay,
 So doth some skilfull artisan reveal
 His master-piece, but doth his skill conceal,
 So God his works doth unto mortalls show,
 But how he works, he doth not let them know;
 Lest if they knew both work and art, they might
 b The art, the work, the worker basely sleight.
 Those works do quickly starve their estimation,
 Which are not fed nor fill'd with admiration.

** Benedicita sit divina sapientia qua salutis humane imperi-
 um excludit, Accius uti super. Demus verum aliquid posse
 cuius nos rationem reddere non possumus. b Facile vilescit quic-
 quid facile percipitur, quod autem ingenii aciem superat quem
 affectum, difficilium eo etiam majorem sui admirationem mo-
 vet, atque id omne quod desiderium nostrum fugit cupiditatem
 pererrat.*

Praise is but cold which from a tongue is sent,
 Not warm'd with wonder and astonishment:
 Cease then to argue, or if you dispute,
 Let faith be Moderator, reason mute:
 Blest be Gods wisdom, who doth mans exclude
 In heavenly matters, here the raw and rude
 Can with the wisest walk, the wisest man
 Can but believe and so the simplest can;
 Yea sometimes sooner than the wisest doe,
 Who carnal wisdom trusting too much to,
 Run mad with reason, and then furiously
 Do cut the knot, they know not to untie:
 Christs a generation cannot be declar'd,
 Believ'd it can be, nothing is too hard
 For faith, where wit and language both do faile,
 To think to speak, faith comes and doth prevaile,
 Faith made the man untouched-virgins wombe
 To swell, and milk into her breast to come:
 Had she not first by faith the word conceiv'd
 Within her soule, her womb had been bereav'd
 Of that preferment to conceive the word,
 Which unto her salvation did afford.
 Faith made the Virgin pregnant, faith must make
 The Christian, Christ into his soule to take:
 As she by faith conceived Christ, so he
 In Christians still by faith conceiv'd must be:

* Generationem ejus quis narrabit. Isa. 53. Fratres, generatio
 Christi enarrari non potest, credi potest & ubi lingua deficit.
 Maximus uti supra.

Faith

Faith in salvation's a compendious way ;
 Wisdome to faith an obstacle and stay.
 All things in God doe humane wit transcend,
 But nothing *faith, where humane wit doth end.
 Let faith supply what onely God can doe :
 Faith onely can believe, and reach unto
 What art by arguing cannot comprehend,
 Faith by believing soon doth apprehend ;
 The things which God hath done for us to day,
 Conceive we cannot, but believe we may ;
 And if we do believe, lets not dispute,
 But speak our faith in accents which doe suite,
 Unto the message which one Angel bringing,
 Immediately a multitude are singing,
 Glory to God on high, on earth be peace,
 And let good will towards Christians never cease.
 Into this mystery they to look desire,
 And looking do not argue but admire,
 Solemnizing the day whose like before
 They never saw, they never shall see more.
 An holy happy day, a day of dayes,
 Greater than any day, whose radiant rayes
 Had they not shin'd and brought this blessed light,
 The world had lain drown'd in eternal night.
 O day of dayes ! which in due estimation,
 Exeels the first day of the worlds creation :

• *Compendium salutis est fides, fidei obstaculum sapientia omnia in deo supra rationem, nihil supra fidem, quicquid solus deus potest facere, sola fides potest credere. Heinſius uti ſup.*

Not

Not al the works w^{ch} theie six days brought forth
 Can equalize this one dayes work for worth,
 Then out of darknesse God did light disclose,
 Now he himself a light is come, that those
 Who sate in darknesse and deaths dreary shade
 Might find the way which unto life is made:
 Then did he o'r the earth the heavens extend,
 Now heaven it self vouchsafeth to descend,
 And kisse the earth, and kindly to embrace it,
 And wth it self 'bove highest height to place it,
 Then after his own image he did frame,
 The last of creatures, whom he man did name,
 Now after mans own image doth he make
 Himself, and our similitude doth take,
 Himself is made that which he made, that he
 Might what he made from finall marring free.
 All things of nothing then he made, but here
 We are new made, who worse than nothing were,
 He spake these words & all things were made then,
 Now is the word made flesh, & dwells with men,
 That men made spirit, who were but flesh before,
 With him one spirit it might be for evermore.
 We do not find that for the worlds creation
 The Angels sang as for the incarnation.

*a Meliores sunt dies in quibus ad eternam vitam renascitur,
 quam in quibus ad haec tempora procreamur, siquidem majora
 sunt dona gratiae, quam naturae, Eucherius.*

*b Jo. 1. 14. c 1 Cor. 6. 17. The Angels shouted at the Creation, Job
 38. 7. but they did not sing for the Creation, as they did for the
 incarnation,*

Glory

Glory to God on high, on earth be peace,

And let good will towards Christians never cease.

• The divine nature our frail nature takes,
And of his nature, us partakers makes;
God of a Virgin pure is born, thereby
To purge mans foul impure nativity,
The Bread of life is in a Manger laid,
That man (become a beast, because he stray'd
From his Creatour, now by grace restor'd
T' a better state than nature could afford)
May with this heavenly provender be fed,
Come man and eat of this so blessed Bread, (cost)
(Bread that did more than all the whole world
And gather up the crumbs that none be lost.
One onely crumb of this doth far surpasse
The Feast that by ^b *Ahasbuerus* once made was.
Come near so many, none shall hungry rise,
This one Loaf all comers will suffice,
The manna of eternall mercy falls
In full abundance, and for gatherers calls.
That man with food of angels may be fed,
And unto life eternall nourished.
Come ye that hunger, gather up this Man,
Which who so eats again, ne'r hunger can,
Yet hungers still, more hunger doth arise
From the sweet food, the more it satisfies,
And let not him who feedeth fear to think
That to his Bread and Food, he shall want Drink.

• 1 Pet. 4. ^b Est. 3.

He

The blessed birth-day.

He who is bread our hunger to expell,
Is against thirst an ever springing well, (tain,
There grows & flows from this, o heavenly moun-
Bread against hunger, & 'gainst thirst a fountain :
Drink of this fountain, which who so once tasteth
Shal never thirst, this ^a fountain never wasteth,
But is to them that drink a water springing
To life eternal, and them thither bringing:
A double vertue this one fountain hath,
It quencherh ^b thirst, and also is a bath
To wash and cense us from our sins pollution,
That so our filth may not be our confusion :
Come every *Naaman* and here bath, thereby
To wash away the souls foul leprosie,
And being made clean, beware thou sin no more,
Least worse insue than that which went before:
But with the thankfull Leper, turn again,
And with thy cleser ever more remain,
Rendering him thanks & singing forth his praise,
Joyning with Angels in their joyfull layes,
Glory to God on high, on earth be peace,
And let good will towards Christians never cease.
To day wars ends, and ^c peace begins to day :
Error doth cease, for we have found the way,
Falshood's removed, for truth to day is brought:
Death perished, for life to day is wrought.

^a Io. 4. ^b Zach. 13. 1. ^c *Christ calls our peace, the way the truth and life.*

Now

Now life begins to live, to live said I!
 Nay rather now life doth begin to die;
 God who is life, mans life did therefore take,
 That he away to his own death might make,
 Unless he man became, he could not die;
 Unless he die, we die eternally.
 Rather than we should suffer endlesse pain,
 He would be born of purpose to be slain:
 Think thou that Christ did then begin to suffer,
 When Judas sold him, and the Jews did offer
 To apprehend him, he did then begin
 To make his soule a ^b sacrifice for sin;
 VVhen he took body, he began to die
 Then, when assuming our mortality,
 He made himself one able to be slain,
 To put on man, is but to put on pain,
 The very instant of his incarnation;
 VVas but the Prologue of his bitter passion.
 His death was at his birth, he then began
 To dye, when he began to put on man;
 His crosse and cradle both at once were made:
 This floure, even in the budding 'gan to fade;
 The drops of blood which at his death he shed,
 VVere but his infant drops of tears di'd red;
 His swathing cloths did with that linnen meet,
 Of which good Joseph made his winding Sheet.

^a Christs passion began at his Incarnation. ^b Isa. 53. 10.

His blood (a soveraign salve) was spread thereon,
 Which plaister cures our wounds corruption.
 Behold how he, a tender Infant cries,
 Who wipes all tears from true repentant eyes,
 And let us of this Infant learn to weep,
 That from eternall tears he may us keep,
 Restore O man the gronings which he lent,
 Return the tears which he for thee hath spent.
 Consider how much, thou to him dost ow,
 Who would for thee a double suffering know,
 Suffering for thee who wert a wretch forlorn,
 Worse at his death, but first in being born,
 What should not we suffer for him who thus,
 Hath from eternall suffering freed us.
 What is for mans salvation left undone,
 Since God to us hath sent his onely son,
 That ever dearly loved son of his,
 In whom alone the Father pleased is :
 A son who by his coming doth restore
 All that our father *Adam* lost and more.
 This son of God made son of man (we see)
 That sons of men made sons of God might be.
 Height is made low, and honour is embas'd,
 That so the base to honour may be rais'd.
 Fullnesse grows empty, emptinesse to fill,
 And wisdom childish to give children skil. (sound
 Strength is made weak, and weaknes strength hath
 The richest poore, that beggars might abound

In

The blessed birth-day.

In the best Riches, and life learns to dye,
That so the dead may live eternally.
Lord what is man that onely for his sake
Th'almighty should such strange exchanges make,
What can poore mortalls in requitall bring
Nothing? yet with heavens Quiristers we'll sing,
Glory to God on high, on earth be peace,
And let good will towards Christians never cease.

Holy Raptures, in contem- plating some of the most observable Adjuncts about our Saviours Nativity.

*The Season of the year wherein our Saviour was born,
namely in the Winter Solstice or sunstead.*

NOW seems the suns unwearied Waggoner,
Wh^e every day surrounds^a this earthly sphere
To make a stand, and breath his restless teames,
Whom through the world convey his golden
Nor doth the day of our^b appearance seem beams
As yet his captive minutes to redeem.

^a A Description of the Winter Solstice: ^b Conceptus enim est
equinoctio verno, natus Solstitio hyberno, & in conceptu e-
jus, & in natiuitate Dñs accepit incrementum, & nascente
vera luce, lucis & diei augmentatur officium, August. de temp.
Ser. 22.

From

From the prevailing light, but doth begin
 To steal thereon, and some advantage win,
 Henceforth the night shall lose, the day shall gain,
 Nor will the sister long in debt remain
 Unto her brother, but will fairly pay
 Some part of what she borrow'd every day,
 Till both be even. This season of the year.

In our * Horizon our day to restore,
 Which sins incroaching night abridg'd before,
 In Summers equinoctiall conceiv'd,
 In Winters sunstead born, we were bereav'd
 Of gladsome day, envelop'd in sad night,
 Til this bright day-star rose, and brought us light:
 Thus did our day at his conception,
 And at his birth take augmentation,
 When such a light into the world is sent,
 How can the night but shrink, the day augment,
 All Hail, O holy, heavenly, happy day,
 That turns our Winter into joyfull May.
 And springing makest a perpetuall spring,
 When first sins Autumne a sad fall did bring:
 A day that maketh everlasting Summer,
 By the approaching of this heavenly comer;
 Who did from heaven to earth, so kindly come,
 That earth by him in heaven might have a room.

* *Hodie noctis damna in diei transeunt lucra, Eucherius hom.*
1. de nat.

O were it Winter-Solstice once with me,
 That my sins might no more increase might see,
 But that the blessed day of Reformation,
 In me might find a joyfull augmentation, (come,
 Who being brightnesse, wouldst in black-mouth
 That by thy coming all might bright become,
 Come unto me, come into me that I
 To righteousness may live, to sin may dy :
 'Tis black-mouth still with me, because of sin,
 O come that I may bright become within ;
 Come that the night of sin may shrink in me,
 And that the dayes of grace increas'd may be.

The time of his birth in the night.

THe light that shines in darknes coms by night
 Those that did sit in darknesse to enlight,
 What means the day star in the night to rise ?
 To shew that he gives light to blindest eyes,
 To shew that he the worlds light is, who may
 Turn the most gloomy night to glad some day.
 But why doth truth, who never shuns the light
 Come like a thief in darknesse of the night,
 To make both coming first and last t' agree,
 That they who him expect should watchfull be.

• Heb. i. 3,

Aliud

Aliud ejusdem argumenti.

WHat? is it night with our Antipodes,
 That thus by night the sun to us doth rise?
 It should be so: the sunne though bright it be,
 Never at once doth the worlds both sides see,
 But our pure sonne above shines and below,
 And no Antipodes at all doth know:
 This sun which now at night doth rise is he,
 Who never set, but rising still doth see,
 Come glorious son spread thine illustrious light,
 On me who wholly darknes am and night.
 My darknesse turn to light, my night to day,
 That so eternal darknesse shun I may,
 And of that blessed light with thee partake,
 Whose luster everlasting day doth make.

The place of his Birth a Stall.

MAN being in honour, had not understanding,
 But turn'd beast from his Creator wandring,
 Him to restore and to make man again,
 God to be born 'mong beasts doth not disdain:
 His mothers child-bed-chamber is a Stall,
 A Cratch his cradle, and the Lord of all,
 For his poore parent ready to lye down,
 Cannot command an Inne in all the Town.
 Uncivil Citizens, and people yilde,
 Thus t'exclude a woman great with child:

So near her time, had you humanity,
You would have shewn to her more courtesie,
You would for such an one have found a place,
Suppose it had been your own mothers case;
Rather than she should in a stall remain,
Your selves without a lodging would have lain,
Are there not still such Innes, to whom no guest
Lesse welcome is than Christ, who is the best.
Sweet Saviour, I an Inne-keeper will be,
The Signe shall be my Heart, come lodge with me.
The damned crue I entertain'd before,
(My roaring sins,) Ile all turn out of doore,
Ile not afford them lodging in a stall,
Thou shalt have Parlour, Chamber, Hall and all
The House, the Master, Servants all shall stand
Ready and prest to be at thy command:
The best chear that I can I will prepare
For thee, and this shall be my chiefest care,
(Because I know, 'tis that which likes thee best)
That all be neat and clean for such a guest. (bed,
Thou, who when first thou cam'st wouldst in no
But in a Virgins womb repose thine head,
Thou that in all thy life lov'dst purity,
And being dead wouldst in pure Linnen lye,
Thou that compared art unto a Dove,
The bird that neatnesse doth, and cleannesse love,
I know that he who shall thee entertain,
Must chiefly care that all be neat and clean,

But how can I hope thou wilt lodge with me,
 In whom all things so foul and sordid be :
 Yet come and lodge, for why I know 'tis true,
 That where thou com'st thou makest all things
 O thou whose birth a stall could stellifie (new.
 With heaven within, and a bright star on high,
 That not the best star-chamber of them all,
 For glory could compare to this star-hall,
 O grace me with thy presence who art able
 To make a palace of th' Augæan stable.

O thou who hadst things of no better worth,
 Than straw and hay to set thy Chamber forth,
 Where thou wert born. Be born in me this day,
 In me poore wretch, who withered am like hay,
 Be born in me, so shall this hay be made
 Fresh as a Rose, and never after fade.

Aliud ejusdem Argumenti.

ARt thou so humble Lord, thou dost not scorn
 To be 'mong oxen, and 'mong Asses born,
 O scorn not me, who am become (alasse)
 More brutish, foolish, than the Ox or Ass.
 For they poore beasts their owners know we see,
 But far more brutish I have not known thee,
 Thou mad'st me first a man, a noble creature,
 Little inferiour to th' Angelick nature.
 But I through sin into a state did throw
 My self these brutish creatures far below.
 Be born in me, that I being born again
 In thee a new-born creature may remain.

The

The publishing of his birth first unto Shepherds.

TO Shepherds is his birth first signifi'd,
 Who by their flocks' night watching did abide
 To shew that the great Shepherd now is born,
 Who no base office for his sheep will scorn;
 But watching o'r his flock doth still remain,
 And they must watch, who will him entertain.
 Come let us with these joyfull shepherds hie
 Unto the cratch where this sweet Babe doth lie,
 I mean his Church, which place doth still afford
 Th'is blessed Infant swathed in his word,
 Let us when there he doth his words impart,
 Lay them up all with *Mary* in our heart.
 More blest by bearing than she did become,
 Than by her bearing him within her womb.
 O blessed man who in his heart doth swath,
 And bind up sure his word for he that hath
 His word, hath him: the word it self is he,
 Then where his word is, needs himself must be.

The publisher of his Birth a blessed Star.

A Glorious angel is the referendarie,
 Who first this tidings unto man did carry,
 An heavenly herald fittest was to bring
 News of the coming of the heavenly King:
 That Gospel by an Angel first was brought,
 To men, which now by man to men is taught,

That gospel which now God by man doth teach,
 No glorious Angel is too good to preach,
 O let Gods ministers (as they are fill'd
 Angels) be like the Angels undefil'd,
 Let them not with an earthly life defame
 The reputation of an heavenly name,
 But strive they others to excel as far,
 As Angels unto them superiour are,
 That whereas others are but men at best,
 They may like Angels shine above the rest,
 What is heav'ns greatest grief, earths greatest evil?
 An Angels place, possessed by a Devil.

O let not an unholy conversation,
 Fully belye an holy appellation.
 Holy the function we may well repute,
 Which holy Angels joy to execute,
 Holy is he, the holiest of all,
 Who doth us to this holy function call,
 Holy the message is which we must do,
 O let the messenger be holy too.

Aliud.

HOW glorious is the news? how full of joy
 In which God none but angels would employ,
 How gladly do these fiery Posts attend,
 When for mans good their Master doth them send:
 No erand they more chearfully go on,
 Than that which tends to mans salvation.

An Angel first was unto Mary sent,
 To acquaint her with his heavenly Lords intent,
 Who, of all Maids made choise of her, that she
 Should both a maiden and a mother be;
 And that of all her sex God had decreed,
 This woman should bring forth the womans seed,
 Which promis'd was that cursed head to bruise,
 Which first the silly woman did seduce,
 An Angel settles Joseph's doubting thought,
 Tels him the holy Ghost, his work had wrought;
 He need not fear her for his wife to take,
 Whom God, not man, did thus a mother make.
 An Angel first, this gladsome Gospel preaches,
 A few poor shepherds th' audience who he reaches.
 Nere was such difference in regard of glory,
 Between a Preacher and an auditory.
 Why should the greatest Doctor now disdain,
 To be a Preacher to the simplest swain:
 If he who sends us no respecter be,
 Of persons (as he saith) then why should we?
 Look we when on our message we are bent
 Not unto whom, but from whom we are sent;
 As welcome unto heaven is he that brings,
 A shepherds soul, as he that doth a Kings.

The celebration of his Birth, by a multitude of Angels.

THe Sermon ended is, the Psalm ensues,
 A Psalm which suiteth with the joyful news:
 The subject of the Sermon preach'd by one;
 A multitude begins when one hath done.

An

An host of heavenly Quiresters do sing
 A joyfull Genethliacon to heavens king :
 And in their song his praises doe recount,
 Whose praise all songs of Angels doth surmount:
 There need but one Angel to impart
 Such news to any true believing heart :
 Good news doth spread it self, files unfestrain'd,
 And glad some tydings soon are entertain'd.
 How quickly did this heavenly sermon sound
 Throughout the world, how many hath it found
 To entertain it with such constancy,
 That all hels rage could not them terrifie,
 The long expected news desired so much,
 And by so many when it came was such,
 As that one Angel was enough to bring it,
 But all the Angels few enough to sing it.

The wisemen conducted by a Star, and bringing Presents.

Follow your guide, you wise men of the East,
 (Though last invited to this heavenly feast)
 The new created Star, which shews the way
 Unto this blessed Babe, and will not stay,
 Till he have brought you where he doth abide :
 But shortly after out of sight doth slide. (graces,
 For when the sonne with beams the world once
 The stars ashamed are to shew their faces.
 Think not that you are glad so farre to come,
 To seek a King, and finde so base a room :
 Think not the room is base, where there is scen
 A star without, a glorious Son within.

Here

Here shall you find that child you far have sought,
 Present to him the Presents you have brought:
 Give gold to him as tribute to your King,
 As God for service incense to him bring, (dy,
 Bring Myrrhe t' imbalm the man who once must
 Left all mankind should dye eternally.

Alind.

VAlk on ye wise men, stay not til he come
 Where wisdom hath tane up an homely
 Think not so long a journey little worth, (room.
 VViser you shall return than you came forth,
 VVill you be wise indeed? Drink of this well
 VVhich wisdom opens in a sily Cell.
 Drink of this well your thirst to satisfie,
 But ere you drink, use th' Adders policy.
 Your humane wisdomes poyson first eject,
 So shall you find true wisdomes sweet effect,
 Had you come fools, you wiser should become
 Than all the wizards you have left at home,
 Return and being return'd report and say
 To those star-gazers that at home did stay,
 Not all the stars they ever saw could shew
 So much to them, as one star did to you;
 Tell then, in all the heavens they never shall
 A greater find, than you found in a stall.

O thou eternall wisdom make me wise,
 That from my heathen Countrey I may rise,
 My fathers house, and kindred to forsake,
 Cause me, that I to thee my way may take,

And

And that I may not erre nor go astray,
 Let that bright star (the word) lead me the way,
 Be that unto my feet a light, and to
 My steps a safe conducting lamp that so
 Vnto the place I safely may attain,
 With these wise men where thou Lord dost remain
 And finding thee who art my soules rich store,
 Let me fall down, and humbly thee adore,
 Offering those gifts which cannot offred be
 By me, unless thou wilt receive from thee,
 The gold of true obedience I will bring
 As tribute due to our eternall King.
 My Frankincense shall be my daily prayers;
 (A pleasing perfume unto thee) my tears
 Shed for my death, and for my sinne, shall be
 My mourning myrrhe still dropping unto thee.

O let this myrrhe still drop till I arrive,
 Where thou and thine in lasting joyes doe live,
 Where thou from whom all comfort doth arise
 Wipest all teares from true repentant eyes,
 Where they shall reap in joy, who here below
 The pretious seed of plenteous tears do sow:
 Sorrow (thou sayst) may for a night remain,
 But in the morning joy returns again.

*All this lifes night Ple be content with sorrow,
 That night once past, joy may give me good-morrow.*

FINIS.

